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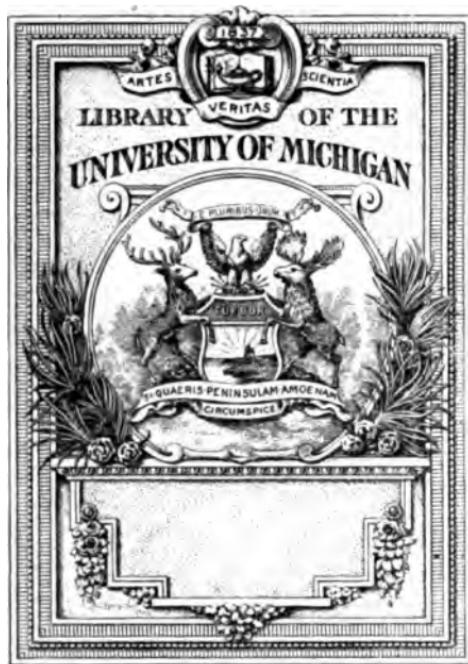
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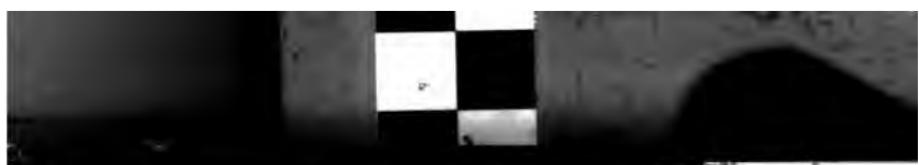
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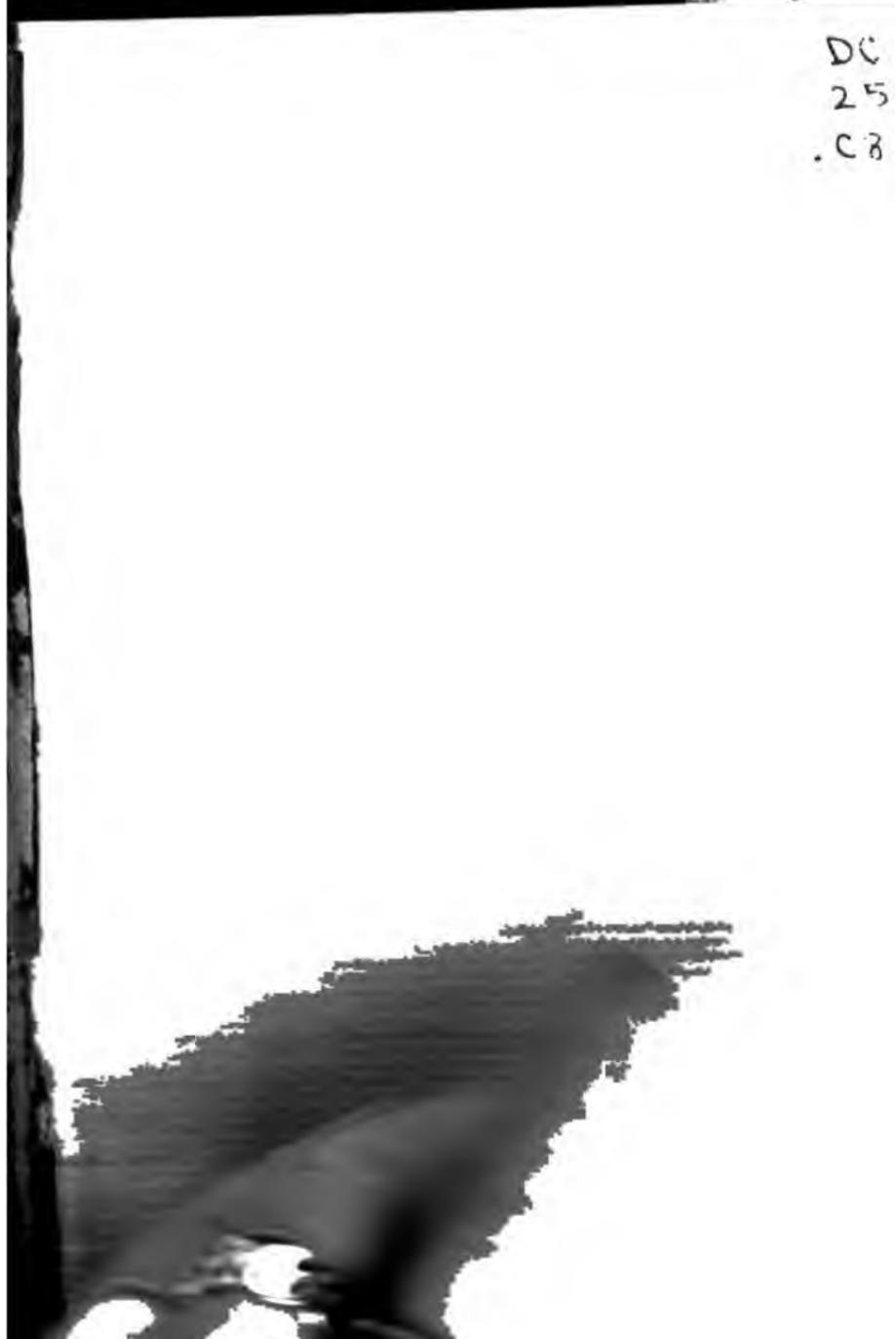
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BY

BARON PIERRE DE COUBERTIN

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, LTD.

1900



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

To

THE REV. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN, M.A.

This little Book

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

P. C.

Paris, November 1899.



PREFATORY NOTE

FOREIGN opinions of France at the present day naturally vary according to the more or less conspicuous benevolence which inspires them. At the same time it has struck me that, taking them all round, they really do not rest upon any solid basis of appreciation, and I believe that this may be attributed to the fact that hardly any one has taken the trouble to look to the details of our contemporary history for the origin of those political or social phenomena which he professes to analyse.

Our history, especially since the death of Napoleon I., appears at first sight to be split into periods perfectly distinct from each other ; historians have yielded to the irresistible temptation of studying them apart, and thus the underlying metaphysical thread which unites them has become less and less visible.

It is this thread which in this little book I shall endeavour to bring to light. In so to speak detaching the nation from those forms of government which have been successively imposed on it, sometimes by a turbulent minority, sometimes by the supreme necessities of the moment, my aim is to show how the work of 1830, of 1848, and of 1867, was to compromise the results gained at the price of so much labour and effort in 1824, in 1846, and in 1856. And is it improbable that the highly advantageous position attained by the Third Republic in 1893 may be compromised in its turn? There are signs which point to this conclusion. If it be so, it will only be one more display of the peculiar incapacity of the French people to profit by their successes, their tendency to lose in victory the force gained in struggle.

From a higher point of view, the career of the French people throughout the nineteenth century is not without a certain grandeur. At the first glance it resolves itself into a series of contradictory experiments in government, cut short by the caprices of revolution; but if we look to the heart of things, we see in it the perpetual beginning of the same work, the

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building up of the final structure on a foundation still shaken by the cataclysms of the preceding century.

Any writer who loves his country is at liberty to help foreigners to a better opinion of it, but at the same time he should be scrupulously careful to write nothing that is not in the strictest accordance with historical truth. I may say that this has invariably been my own procedure, and I consider that, so far from serving my country, I should be dishonouring her if I tried to exalt her either at the expense of neighbouring and rival countries, or by representing facts in an illusory light. It will be seen that my attack is chiefly directed against those legends with which contemporary history and more especially our own annals abound. They have sprung in the first instance from a wrong point of view inspired by the passions of the moment, and from that want of balanced judgment, by which, unless there come a very vigorous reaction, human nature is too easily carried away. They falsify history in the most pernicious fashion, and by falsifying history they end by falsifying the historic sense. It is just as absurd to maintain, for instance, that

Napoleon I. was a Liberal, as to say that Louis XVIII. was foisted on France by Foreign Powers ; as absurd, if you like, to see in Louis Philippe the elected sovereign of the people as to refuse that title to Napoleon III. Such assertions are like a daub that hides the work of some fine old master ; our first care should be to remove it that we may see the underlying truth.

In order to judge properly of past events we must first give up every preconceived idea, then go round them, examining them successively under all their aspects ; finally, we must reproduce by thought, as far as may be, the atmosphere which once surrounded them and the background from which they stand out. I know no other way by which we may approach as near as possible to the truth. And I think it is always well to make clear at the outset of any historical work the principle on which it has been constructed, which is the *raison d'être* of this brief prefatory note.

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FRANCE SINCE 1814

CHAPTER I

TWO BEGINNINGS OF ONE PERIOD, 1814-1815

It would be difficult to exaggerate the profound difference between the Restoration of 1814 and that of 1815. In 1814 the dominant feeling in France was a general lassitude. The country had awakened from a splendid dream which little by little had assumed the aspect of a hideous nightmare. A quarter of a century had passed since the day when the States-General, transformed into the National Assembly, had inaugurated a Revolution which was meant to organise happiness for everybody, with the result that everybody was steeped in glory and tragedy and nobody was happy. More serious still, a general impression existed that

all these immense efforts had failed to produce any stability whatever, and that the colossal god so elaborately constructed actually had feet of clay. Thanks to the recoil of these twenty-five years—years so tempestuous and overcharged with events—the image of the old Monarchy loomed larger; men saw in it a certain immobile and superb beauty, and many a time they regretted that they had found no way to better its imperfections and make terms with it. After all, it had in it a principle of stability which would have enabled France to escape the abysses into which, one after another, she had plunged and all but perished.

So when a hitherto unforeseen opportunity arose for the recall of the Bourbons, there was no reason why everybody should not be pleased to see them again. They were in no sense imposed on France by a Foreign Power, consequently there was nothing in their return which could possibly wound the national pride. It was later that this astonishing legend became current, and the opposition found in it a formidable weapon. But revolutionary opposition is not as a rule very scrupulous in its choice of arguments, and this particular one

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never had any historical value, being in flat contradiction to historic truth. As a matter of fact, the candidate who was about to become Louis XVIII. had long ago lost any illusions he may have had as to what his house might expect from Foreign Powers. In the course of his long exile, even among those to whom he was allied by ties of blood, he had not invariably found the ordinary consideration due to his rank and his misfortunes ; with the exception of the Prince Regent of England, no one had taken any real interest in him, and England could do no more for him than give utterance to a passion necessarily somewhat platonic. As for the Allies, they had never dreamed of imposing on France any form of government whatever ; their one idea was to overthrow Napoleon. Thus when after the capitulation the Emperor Alexander of Russia made known to Caulaincourt, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, his resolution to make no terms with Napoleon, he was careful to add that France would be at perfect liberty to dispose of herself as she best pleased. He avoided the most distant allusion to the restoration of the Bourbons, for whom, by the way, he had very little personal affection. Now at the

date of this decision, eighteen days had already passed since the Bourbons had been proclaimed at Bordeaux, where on the 12th of May, 1814, the Mayor had hoisted the white standard ; and Louis XVIII.'s nephew, the Duc d'Angoulême, who was at the moment in Spain, betook himself to Bordeaux with all possible speed. On other points of territory the same proclamation was about to be made.

It was Talleyrand who moved the Emperor of Russia to favour this idea of restoring the old dynasty to the Throne of France. Talleyrand's great skill consisted in the invariably apt divination of coming events. It was said of him that what Talleyrand thought to-day, everybody would be thinking to-morrow, and nothing could be more true. He comprehended that the French would hail Louis XVIII., because this Prince was the very incarnation of the peace and stability they so greatly needed. In fact, they hailed him without the least suspicion that Foreign Powers had any hands in their determination ; consequently without any injury to their self-love.

As it happened, the foreigners who assisted at this restoration bore not the slightest re-

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semblance to those who were to be seen the following year brutal in their irritation. They seemed to be agreeably surprised at finding themselves in Paris, and their attitude towards the things they saw there was one almost of respect. The conditions they imposed were very mild and reasonable. The Prussians, it is true, much wished them harder, for their hearts were still stirred with righteous indignation for the manner in which Napoleon had treated them after Iena. But this time they could not very easily give effect to their resentment. France was not Napoleon. It was against the leader not the nation that they bore a grudge. The peace of the 30th of May, 1814, then left to France the frontiers that were hers in 1792, advantageously rectified in several points. Saarbruck, Landau, Mulhouse, Montbéliard, Annecy, Chambéry, and a part of Savoy remained to her; her colonies, with the exception of the Île de France and St. Domingo, were given back to her; she suffered no shameful humiliation. On the other hand, the King (who had meanwhile landed at Calais on the 24th of April, and was slowly making his way towards Paris), in his famous declaration of Saint-Ouen, published

on the eve of his entry into the capital, had laid the foundations of a wise liberty. The majority of the French people might well be satisfied, and in fact they were.

But at the very moment when the King and his ministers were setting so loyally to work ; while Baron Louis was assuring a long future for the financial credit of France by founding his first budget on the Monarchy's pledge to accept all debts contracted by previous *régimes* ; while Talleyrand at Vienna was accomplishing his diplomatic *tour de force*, breaking the harmony established among the four allied powers (England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia), squeezing himself in edgeways, and settling down genially in their midst, playing them off one against the other by raising now the question of Saxony, now that of Poland ; finally, on the 3rd of January, 1815, contriving to sign a secret treaty, offensive and defensive, between England, France, and Austria : while all these things were happening it was evident in Paris that henceforth there would exist three distinct French nations, amongst which a difficult equilibrium would have to be established and maintained. The first was the France of the

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Jacobins, the second the France of the *Emigrés*, the third the France of everybody else.

Now no Restoration of any dynasty or régime was ever before confronted with such a situation. The English Restoration was altogether a different affair. Oliver Cromwell was a usurper. Certainly he embodied political ideas very different from those among which the Stuarts moved ; but between his government and that of Charles I. there was no impassable gulf such as was fixed between Louis XVI.'s government and that of Napoleon I. I grant that at the beginning of his reign Napoleon considered himself Louis XVI.'s heir, but later, as his ambition grew more vast, he traced his descent back as far as Charlemagne, not to say Cæsar. As a matter of fact, he never was the heir and successor of Louis XVI., that is to say, a real King of France. He had his origin and his *raison d'être* in the Revolution, and the Revolution alone ; he drew his profit from it ; he utilised its crimes in order to confiscate its rights ; he took possession of it to serve his own personal ends. The Jacobins were his most valuable servants, and the spirit of Jacobinism his weightiest lever.

A great deal has been written about Jacobin-

ism, but historians agree in recognising in it a deadly political poison, and there is none from which France has suffered more. It is not however a poison indigenous to the country ; we find no traces of it before the writers of the eighteenth century corrupted the mind of France with their many utopias ; but from that date it developed rapidly. There is reason however to believe that but for Napoleon it would have eliminated itself of its own accord. The Revolution and its horrors had pretty well used up the Jacobins ; the Empire saved them. It accepted their theories, and even condescended to apply them, with the help of the sword and the tambour. Thus was Jacobinism perpetuated, crystallised under the name of Bonapartism.

It was opposed in 1814 by the old party of reaction, also crystallised, not by the Napoleonic chemistry but by the atrophy of emigration. Only realise the state of mind of these guileless *émigrés* : many of them were men who in their exile had led a life of privation, and were absolutely sincere in their devotion to the Monarchy. They never doubted that from the day when this Monarchy was restored they too would be reinstated in all

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their ancient privileges. Possibly many of them would have been quite ready to give them up immediately afterwards, to renounce them a second time as on the memorable 4th of August. But the restitution of these privileges seemed to them an act of strict justice, of mere equity which it was manifestly impossible that the King should refuse them. No wonder if the first acts of the royal Government overwhelmed these poor souls with amazement and dismay.

The two French nations, who after a separation of five-and-twenty years still entertained a lively hatred for each other, could not conceive that any one could dream of trying to conciliate their interests in the face of their respective pasts. Between them, however, there stood a third France, by far the largest of the three, for whose repose that conciliation was imperatively called for. This France was destined to be misunderstood during the greater part of the century, to see her dearest wishes set at naught. The Hundred Days, the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848 were to be brought about without her consent, even against her will. It was she who later on was to throw herself into the arms of Louis Napoleon, later

yet, to uphold the Third Republic through fear of some other Revolution and desire of political and social stability. She is naturally somewhat apathetic, and suffers herself to be circumvented rather too easily; but after all, she is the true France, and it is impossible to understand her history if we do not see in her the victim of those others, reactionaries and Jacobins, who for eighty years have outraged her turn by turn.

Louis XVIII., with his large political sense, at once saw in this France, which was neither reactionary nor Jacobin, the indispensable support of his own throne and that of his successors. But he was aware that time alone would enable him to secure that support, for already, under the very shadow of his throne, a pitched battle was being fought between the reactionaries, known as ultra-Royalists or "ultras" for short, and the Jacobins, who adorned themselves with the inappropriate title of "Liberals." This battle, as it happened, was quite inevitable, and its importance has been very much exaggerated. Whether Beugnot, the Prefect of Police, may have ordered the people of Paris to decorate their houses in honour of the procession of the *Fête*

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Dieu; or whether at some banquet given by the city, the Prefect of the Seine and the Municipal Council may have been caught waiting on the Royal Family in person; or Marshal Soult, the Minister of War, may have seen fit to add a chaplain to his suite, there was nothing in it beyond these "écart d'un zèle trop ardent" of which the King had to complain publicly a little later. To tell the truth, the Jacobins had much more serious grievances to exploit; among others, the growing discontent of the Army. Not only had it been necessary to disband a part of it, but the mistake had been made of establishing a *Maison Militaire du Roi*, much too numerous and much too expensive, to say nothing of many injustices besides. Then there were the highly unpopular taxes of the Empire; their abrogation had been promised, but it had been found necessary to retain them from the moment when the Government assumed entire financial responsibility for the past.

When we consider, on the one hand, the facility with which the Monarchy crumbled away in 1814, and, on the other, the manner in which its re-establishment was received in 1815, we are tempted to give too much

importance to these causes of unpopularity. We have to look at the fall of the first Restoration in order to judge properly of its popularity. The landing of Napoleon at Cannes was hardly known when a perfect explosion of Royalism broke out. All State functionaries, the National Guard, the young men of the University were united in a unanimous determination to defend the Throne. Unfortunately these good intentions were paralysed by the defection of the regiments. It could still be hoped that the officers would make a stand against the Emperor; it was by no means possible that the soldiers could be brought to fire on him. He knew it, and exposed himself with magnificent audacity to their bayonets, making straight for them and kindling them to enthusiasm by his look and voice.

However, this temper of the troops was not the gravest factor in the problem. Moreover, those which were not actually present at the passage of the Emperor might possibly have resisted the contagion; and in certain regiments, notably the 10th of the Line, Royalism was fervent. The disaffection of the troops was seconded, where it was not directly pro-

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voked, by a civil element which deserves our attention. Men met with the fixed intention of noisily proclaiming their adherence, and exciting others to support the Empire, paralysing by their interference the citizens' goodwill. It was soon seen what manner of men they were ; on every hand excesses were committed by them, pillage and revolt and arson, which recalled the worst days of the Revolution ; the country felt itself about to fall again under the horrible yoke of the *Septembriseurs*. The Prefects were uneasy. The Prefect of the Côtes du Nord wrote : "If we do not take care, we shall see again the bloody days of '93." The same opinion was held by the sub-Prefect of Lunéville and others, and M. de Salvandy declared, in a Memoir addressed to the Emperor : "At any moment we may see a return of '93." This was the virus of the Terror. It is not with impunity that a nation learns such a lesson of blood and crime as that of '93. The virus must work in her for long after, ready to burst out at any time of disturbance.

But all the same, a great change had passed over France ; and Napoleon, stupefied with astonishment, complained that he could "no

longer recognise her." Liberal ideas confronted him on every hand. The generals themselves called for a Constitution. Magistrates, professors, and the inferior Government officials remained stolidly hostile to him; they were subdued by fear, but no sincere adherence could be expected from them. Many of the Prefects and sub-Prefects ~~had~~ their nomination to the Emperor, Louis XVIII. on his accession having kept on about half the functionaries of the Empire; but even they were hostile. Everywhere the mayors showed their lukewarmness and their ill-will. The greater number of them, except in the departments of the East, were "*anciens seigneurs*" nominated between 1809 and 1816 by Napoleon, who was tormented with a secret desire to rally round him the old *noblesse*. This time, believing that he could safely trust to the result of the elections, he decided that the Communes with a population of less than 5,000 should themselves nominate their mayors. Two-thirds of those elected were hostile to him. "During the month of April," we read in an official document, "a million tricolours were pulled down in the north, west, and south." So much for the legendary enthusiasm

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with which the French nation has so long been supposed to have welcomed the return from Elba! It is remarkable that these demonstrations of public feeling date from the first few weeks, when the country still flattered itself that a war could be escaped, when the people of the villages and the small towns, easily enough deceived by the optimism affected by the Government, were still capable of illusion on this point, and when not a single foreign bayonet had as yet been seen upon the frontiers.

On his arrival at Lyons, on the 24th of March, Napoleon published the famous series of nine decrees by which he annulled all that the Restoration had done, even nominations to the Legion of Honour and acts of simple justice. But he had hardly set foot in the Tuileries before that foot found itself thrust into the King's shoes. In fact, he had no other alternative than either to rouse those dangerous revolutionary passions which were still rumbling underground, or to pass under the Caudine Forks of Liberalism. To this latter fate he resigned himself.

The *Acte Additionnel* drawn up by Benjamin Constant was a mere counterfeit of the Charter,

which pleased neither the Emperor, on whom it was imposed, nor the nation, which felt with what an ill-grace he had lent himself to it. Submitted to a *plébiscite*, the *Acte Additionnel* gained an infinitesimal number of votes, while the number of those who refused to vote was colossal. Public opinion obliged the Emperor to convoke the electors without delay; in all France there were hardly found 7,000 voters for the election of the new Chamber, in some departments from fifteen to twenty citizens only gave in their votes. The electoral organisation of 1802 had been revived; that is to say, deputies in each department were nominated by from two to three hundred electors chosen from among the six hundred citizens who paid the most taxes; added to these were the dignitaries of the Legion of Honour and two hundred electors designated by the Government. In spite of these precautions and the number of refusals, the Chamber counted only eighty Bonapartists and thirty or forty Jacobins to five hundred Constitutionalists of various shades of Liberalism.

Such was the internal policy. External policy there was none. All the representatives of the Powers had left Paris, those of

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Louis XVIII. had ceased to exercise their functions. Abroad Napoleon was surrounded by an absolute quarantine. The King found himself at Gand in the midst of Ambassadors and Ministers, the Council and the *Maison Militaire*. Talleyrand continued to sit at the Congress of Vienna as the representative of his sovereign. Everything contributed to show that in the eyes of all Napoleon was no better than an adventurer; unrecognised abroad, at home tolerated rather than accepted, his situation was such that not even a brilliant victory would have had power to improve it.

As it happened, the great catastrophe everybody was looking for came; and without hesitation the Chamber declared itself permanent, refused to proclaim Napoleon II., while it exacted from the Emperor his abdication pure and simple. He was as good as annihilated; for Waterloo had been his last card. He gave himself up for lost, and round him defection was general. Louis XVIII. succeeded in restoring himself. With the Ministers and functionaries who had surrounded him during this brief interregnum, he again took possession of France, but this time he met with a very different reception from that of 1814.

The French owed their King a grudge for the undignified facility with which he had fallen. They did not reflect that another man would have fallen with still greater facility and rather less dignity.

Very noteworthy are the abrupt changes of opinion which characterise this memorable epoch. France had come to the unanimous conclusion that the Imperial *régime* was a brilliant and glorious makeshift, but that it had failed to provide a solution of the problem. The Hundred Days were not calculated to modify this impression. Unfortunately they destroyed the certainty which it had been possible to feel a year earlier. In 1814 Louis XVIII. seemed to be the unique heaven-sent sovereign, wrapped in the mysterious power of his principle, the tutelary protector of his country and its liberty. From the moment of his return nobody dreamed that his throne could possibly be overturned. Many documents of the period give this impression of finality; it was felt not only by the people, always prone to a beautiful simple faith in things, but by the classes educated into scepticism. Memories of the Revolution increased the strength and solidity of the House

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of Bourbon. To overturn it had required a terrific cataclysm, an epic crime; and that crime had scooped out an abyss in which the entire nation had nearly perished. Was it likely that a race so strong, and with so great a past behind it, could possibly be tumbled over in a mere riot, like some dynasty of a day? Such a catastrophe as that would have required the resurrection of the Convention and the scaffold, an hypothesis which no sane person could for a moment entertain.

In 1815 everything was changed. That child-like faith in the stability of the Monarchy had been considerably shaken, for the Monarchy had visibly melted away before a mere military *pronunciamiento*, although it was supported by the majority of the nation. What earthly security did it then offer? The Royal Family had lost its prestige, and it was not so popular in the country that it could afford to lose it. The French people were as yet unaware of the political genius and persevering will that were latent in Louis XVIII.; it but dimly suspected the great qualities of his nephew, the Duc d'Angoulême. Owing to his having played no leading part in history, this modest prince has still to wait for history's

just reversal of its verdict. At Bordeaux, at the beginning of the Hundred Days, Louis XVI.'s daughter, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, displayed an energy which caused Napoleon to say of her, "Madame d'Angoulême is the only man in the family";¹ but her ordinary mood was melancholy and supercilious; the Duc de Berri was considered violent and somewhat limited; the Comte d'Artois frivolous and narrow in his ideas; the old Duc de Bourbon, a nonentity. But the Duc d'Orléans was already beginning to command the attention of a few.

On the other hand, the fact remained that Napoleon had granted a Constitutional Charter of his own, against his will to be sure, and without any very sincere intention of remaining faithful to it. Nevertheless, it was enough to prove that liberty and legitimacy were not, as was hitherto supposed, inseparable terms.

¹ A carelessness by no means uncommon has given rise to the story that Napoleon's words, uttered in 1815, referred to the Duchesse de Berri. Now in 1815 the Duchesse de Berri was not married. Besides, she gave no special signs of virility beyond the insurrection which she stirred up in Vendée in 1832, at which date Napoleon had been dead eleven years.

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In 1814 they went side by side, each acting in some sort as a check upon the other. But in 1815 the necessity of their union was less apparent. In short, Louis XVIII., though always respected as the original author of the Charter, was no longer *the King*, but *a King*, which for the future constituted a radical difference. The Restoration was found to be falsified in its principle of inviolable heredity. Between it and the ancient Monarchy there stood henceforth something more than the great drama of the Revolution and the Empire —there was the brief episode of the Hundred Days. It had suffered more in three months than in five-and-twenty years.

Moreover, difficulties had increased a hundredfold. First there was the presence of the foreign armies; in Paris alone their maintenance cost 600,000 francs a day, and three-fourths of France was occupied.¹ The Russians abandoned themselves to pillage. The Prussians passed their requisitions without mercy—and no wonder, when we know in what state of mind they began the campaign. M. Henri Houssaye has given us some typical

¹ The sum total spent on the occupation was 2,416,000,000 francs (£96,640,000).

extracts from articles published in the German papers :

"The French imagine that they have not been conquered ; we must convince them that they are. It is only by taking from them for a century all desire to enrich themselves by war, that we shall prevent this turbulent nation from annoying its neighbours. . . . We did wrong to treat with the French ; we should have exterminated them. This band of brigands *must* be exterminated. . . . This time partition must be made of France. . . . There will be no peace for the world as long as a French people exists. Let us make it a people of Neustria, of Burgundy, of Aquitaine. . . . No more treaties ! The proscription proclaimed by the Congress against the leader must be extended to the nation at large. We must exterminate them—kill them like so many mad dogs."¹

This was not the mere passing exaltation of a press excited by the prospect of war ; it was the sentiment of the majority of Germans, and signs of a similar though less violent feeling were to be found amongst other nations. This Gallophobia was the natural result of Napoleon's monstrous scheme for subjugating Europe and the entire world ; it has been kept up till the present day by the shocks and

¹ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 19th and 25th ; the *Nürnberg Correspondent*, April 1st ; *Augsburg Gazette*, March 25th and April 12th ; *Frankfort Journal*, May 3rd.

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perpetual changes entailed by our policy, and by the fear of the disturbance and complications it may cause to other nations. Few Frenchmen realise how far, even so late as the middle of the century, the "French system" seemed incompatible with the general peace. The Germans of 1815, who had suffered from it more than any other nation, were anxious to disintegrate France altogether; their very least ambition was that she would give back the conquests of Louis XIV.

It was here that Wellington's energy interposed. This great Englishman realised that it was of the utmost importance to his country that the integrity of France should be respected; realised, too, that this integrity was necessary to the peace of Europe. The Emperor Alexander also intervened. He took much more interest in the Monarchy now that he foresaw that his favourite Richelieu¹ was about to become its Prime Minister. And when this prospect was realised, he made a

¹ The Duc de Richelieu, who emigrated to Russia, entered the service of the Emperor, founded Odessa, and rendered in South Russia services which made him highly popular.

further reduction of from eight hundred to seven hundred millions in the war indemnity, and induced the Allies to give up Condé, Charlemont, Givet, and the forts of Écluse and Joux, positions which would have given the enemy command of the French valleys. Finally, the 150,000 men who composed the corps of occupation were to remain in France five years instead of seven.

This second Treaty of Paris was received in Germany with transports of indignation ; but for all its apparent lenity it seemed hard enough to the French ; the more so, no doubt, as it entailed painfully humiliating conditions, such as the disbanding of the army which had fought at Waterloo, the removal from Paris of the pictures and *objets d'art* obtained in twenty-five years of foreign conquest, and, last, the drawing up of the famous Holy Alliance. To be sure, France would have been less offended at this Alliance if she had understood its absurd tenor and still more absurd origin. But when we realise the nation's situation at that time, it is difficult to estimate too highly all that she owed to the intervention of Alexander and of Wellington. By a

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singular coincidence, sixty years later (1875), it was England and Russia who for the second time intervened to destroy the malignant designs of Prussia.

Thus, in 1815, the nation was confronted with the same problem as in 1814—the foundation of a Constitutional Monarchy. But the lamentable episode of the Hundred Days had rendered almost useless the tools it possessed for accomplishing this work. Abroad, the situation was altogether modified, nothing, or almost nothing remained of the conquests of the Revolution. Europe, leagued against France, held her under a humiliating yoke, her governors saw for her no honourable alliance, no means of playing an effective rôle in the concert of the Powers. At home, her loss in material and moral forces was enormous. The mere money loss, perhaps, might have been repaired by good administration and wise economy; but prestige compromised, confidence shaken, old antagonisms revived—these things could only be wiped away after many years, if ever.

Louis XVIII. and his ministers set themselves courageously to the interrupted work, bringing to it a most laudable spirit of

moderation. The number of their proscriptions amounted but to ninety-two, of which nineteen were military. They recalled the Chamber of the Peers, and among the new titles added to those of 1814 was that of Lanjuinais, President of the Chamber during the Hundred Days. Baron Louis carried his budget through as before, without repudiating any of the heavy debts contracted through recent events. Unfortunately these examples, in spite of their exalted source, were by no means generally followed. The disturbances in the provinces which arose from the return of Napoleon had never ceased; nearly 17,000 soldiers had been employed during the Hundred Days in a repression which was apparently inadequate. The disturbances continued, sometimes assuming the character of reprisals between rival factions. This excitement, added to that caused by the pressure of the foreign armies, was not exactly conducive to a prudent policy of *juste milieu*. Extreme Royalists had no difficulty, as it happened, in incriminating a policy which in the eyes of the less enlightened portion of the nation might be held responsible—however little it was so in reality—for the misfortunes of the

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preceding year. Electors,¹ borne along on a path of which they were soon to recognise the danger, sent to the Paris Chamber a majority who, under the pretence of fortifying the Monarchy, were about to call for the most compromising and high-flown solutions of pressing questions. The greater part were rural proprietors, old émigrés, men unused to politics, inexperienced and sometimes ignorant, who belonged to the lower ranks of the nobility and were jealous of the higher—jealous, too, to secure for themselves a preponderance of power, even if the principle of Royalty was to suffer.

For it has been pleasantly said of this Chamber, called the “Introuvable” because of its exaggerations, that it was “plus royaliste que le Roi.” It would be more correct to say that it was revolutionary in its own way; continually claiming new rights, extending its influence as far as possible, and trying to inspire the Government with its own passions. Its temper was sufficiently manifested in the early days when a deputy, M. de La Bourdonnais, was heard frantically demanding

¹ Their number was found to be double that of the voters during the elections of the Hundred Days.

"des fers, des bourreaux, des supplices," for his adversaries. It was more clearly defined during the trial of Maréchal Ney, when deputies actually posted a volunteer faction at the door of the chamber where he was detained, to make sure that the Maréchal should not escape. Richelieu had agreed with the King that after his condemnation Ney's pardon should be asked by the Duchesse d'Angoulême. Ladies of high rank visited this princess and implored her not to interfere. Such furious excitement had never before been seen in civilised society. So when it was known that La Valette, arrested about the same time as the Maréchal, had made off, the fury of the *ultras* knew no bounds.

It turned against the regicides. Terrific measures were suggested against them; measures which the Cabinet did its best to reject. But banishment was proposed as the very least that could be done. The Chancellor, Pasquier, knowing that this was contrary to the King's intentions, asked Louis XVIII. for his opinion. "Richelieu," says he in his *Mémoires*, "gave me to understand that the King was immovable in his resolution to fulfil without exception the promises made in the

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Charter." Notwithstanding, banishment was unanimously voted for with but three dissenting voices, and the Ministers considered themselves obliged to support this manifestation of the will of the Chamber. They had forced the King's hand.

The religious question was no less a cause of trouble. The King was besieged with petitions for the abrogation of Article V. of the Charter, promising liberty to every form of worship. Restitution of the property of the clergy confiscated during the Revolution was also demanded, and on this he put his veto. Private committees were formed for the purpose of laying information. They required the reform of the army, the administration, the prefecture system ; professors, magistrates, academicians, soon became the objects of denunciations, and the Ministry more than once was weak enough to yield, and punished functionaries whose chief fault was that they did not share the passions of the *ultras*. The King exercised his prerogative of pardon in favour of several of the military, but the famous conspiracy of Didier, at Grenoble, exaggerated as it was by General Donnadieu, who wished to take credit for putting it down,

brought about a new series of trials and executions.

All this violence was only the reflux of the great wave of excitement caused by the return of Napoleon. Curiously enough, more than one old servant of the Empire, supposing him to be submerged for ever, appeared to swell the number of the *ultras* by mere force of habit and affection for extreme ideas and arbitrary solutions. This state of things lasted till the day when Louis XVIII. very courageously decided to dissolve the "Introuvable" Chamber, and appeal to the country. As may be imagined, the *ultras* was scandalised, but the country was infinitely obliged to the King for his initiative. The Constitutional Monarchy had wakened to its normal life; beneficent tolerance stooped from the throne. Louis XVIII. showed then that he did not propose to be the King of the Royalists alone, but the King of the French people.

CHAPTER II

A RETROSPECT OF EIGHT YEARS—1824.

LOUIS XVIII. died on the 16th of September, 1824, and his brother, "Monsieur," the Comte d'Artois, reigned in his stead as Charles X. Louis had reigned ten years. The Hundred Days, and the violent reactions they caused, had terribly increased for him the difficulties inseparable from all restorations. We have seen how he bravely dissolved the celebrated "Introuvable" Chamber, whose fantastic proceedings had disturbed the country. What happened after that in those eight important years on which hung the future of the Monarchy? What support did the King receive from his princes, his ministers, and his Parliament? From 1815 to 1820 the tendency had been towards an increasing Liberalism. First Richelieu, then General Dessoires, and the Comte (afterwards Duc)

Decazes were at the head of cabinets which leaned more and more of their own accord towards the moderate Left. In 1820 the assassination of the Duc de Berri had been the signal for a reaction which restored to power Richelieu (changing his bearings this time for the Right), and then brought in Villèle, one of the leaders of the *ultra* party. Even the friends of the Villèle Ministry prophesied for it a brief existence. Nevertheless, it contrived to last seven years, and found itself still in power at the death of Louis XVIII.

At the Tuileries, the King found in his brother an indefatigable opponent. Not that the future Charles X., whose temperament was more or less amiable and frivolous, could have defended his opinions and pursued his ends with any very conspicuous decision ; but what was more serious, he suffered opposition to be organised in his name, and made himself its willing mouthpiece. I shall come back to this. The Duc d'Angoulême, who had too little self-confidence, and was, moreover, afraid of displeasing his father by taking his uncle's part, fortified himself by a discreet silence. The death of the Duc de Berri, second son of the Comte d'Artois, was a great misfortune

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for the Monarchy, seeing that his eldest son, the Duc d'Angoulême, had no children, and that he himself had only a daughter by his marriage with the Princess of the Two Sicilies. But seven months after his tragic death the Duchesse de Berri was delivered of that son of his who was to have been Henry V., and never was anything but the Comte de Chambord. His unexpected birth moved the country to a genuine outburst of Royalism, and seemed of the happiest augury for the future.

The King found in his ministers the support which he missed in his family. Circumstances in this respect favourable to his crown had gathered round him a whole constellation of remarkable men, distinguished by various titles. These men deserve well at the hands of posterity.

First, there were the born statesmen, such as Richelieu and Decazes. The European eminence assured to Richelieu, both by his own nobility of character and his friendship with the Emperor of Russia, was of immense benefit to France. The anticipated evacuation of territory, and the re-admittance of France into the concert of European Powers were the twofold aim which he attained at the Congress

of Aix-la-Chapelle (1817). His uprightness, his honesty, impressed even his adversaries ; his disinterested devotion knew no bounds. Decazes never reached the moral eminence of Richelieu, but was distinguished by his prolific energy and almost prophetic insight. He formulated his programme in the fine phrase : “Royaliser la France, et nationaliser la royauté !” That was the supreme necessity of the moment, and it could not be summed up more clearly and concisely. To be sure, in the application of his liberal policy, Decazes was occasionally guilty of somewhat arbitrary proceedings which recalled the former Prefect of Police. Again, the extreme favour in which he was held by Louis did not tend to make him very popular with his contemporaries. A favourite is always distrusted. His correspondence with the King, now being published, exonerates him from many reproaches, while it throws upon the figure of the old king a still more flattering light.

Then De Serre, that great orator, always at the post of danger in spite of the illness that was sapping his forces, his eloquence magnificently victorious over party spirit. Pasquier, too, with his splendid sense, the sane and

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upright judgment that was never carried away, never lost sight of the line he wished to follow. And those skilled specialists, the Minister of War, the Maréchal Gouvion St. Cyr—who gave his name to the famous military law of 1817, that wise and virile measure which reorganised the army, established the principle of regular promotion, and prepared the way for victories in Spain and later in Algiers—he and the Ministers of Marine, the Marquis de Clermont-Tonnerre and Councillor Portal (author of the celebrated Ordinance of 1819), and last, the great Ministers of Finance, Baron Louis, Roy, Corvetto, Villèle, of whose administrations it has been said that the budgets of France had never been better organised and better conceived. Villèle was also at the head of the Government. If he did not bring to those high functions the spirit of Richelieu or Decazes, he at least showed considerable ability, and his exercise of power was sufficiently moderate to expose him to the violent attack of those ardent Royalists who had themselves advanced him to power. These leaders were backed by an honest and enlightened staff, well

able to understand their aims and carry them out.

Unfortunately, from 1816 to 1824 the Parliament had almost entirely withheld its support. When we look at the long series of French Parliamentary assemblies, they reveal a peculiar threefold character which seems to have been pretty much the same from the very beginning of the century. Intemperance of language, and a certain inconsequence of action, with an irresistible tendency, if not to form conspiracies of their own, at any rate to denounce other people's, are the distinguishing characteristics of French deputies at the present day. We must not jump to the hasty conclusion that they have made no progress in that time. On the contrary, on several occasions the Chambers of the Third Republic have displayed a significant unanimity in dealing with national questions, and have been known to sink their private preferences in their anxiety for the public good. Any one who studies the history of French Parliamentarism with an open mind will be convinced that since 1814 its upward progress has been continuous. But the French

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deputy is still none the less liable to go wrong in the way we have indicated, and during the Restoration his aberrations were extremely frequent.

That intemperance of language, which was quite as characteristic of the Left as of the Right, arose as much from the inexperience of the tribune as from the virulence of opinions. It was increased by the fact that the members of the Chamber were not used to the free discussion of public questions in a large area under a running fire of comments. The situation provided some excuse for it. We might even say that the inconvenient tendency to get intoxicated with your own eloquence, to exaggerate your meaning, to say a great deal more than you intended to say, however much it was to be deplored, did not entail any very serious consequences: *Verba volant, acta manent.* But it is impossible to describe the levity, the *naïveté*, with which the deputies of the Restoration shook the throne they proposed to defend, and made impossible the government they desired to found.

The Right soon showed its preference for the dangerous policy of stimulating reaction by exaggerating the movements which tend

to bring it about. This policy, in spite of its detestable results, still characterises our electoral morals. The programme of the Right, which was the programme of the "Introuvable," survived that Chamber. Chateaubriand later made an ironical offer to support Decazes if he would consent to "change the electoral law, to suppress regular promotion in the army, to restore the right of primogeniture, and to reorganise the monastic orders." In other words, to return to the Three Orders of the *ancien régime*, Clergy, Noblesse, and Third Estate. To tell the truth, I believe that many who supported this astonishing programme entertained no illusions as to the possibility of realising it, they simply made use of it as a cloak, and a remarkably ill-fitting cloak it was. If there was one thing which in the eyes of the people justified the Revolution, with all its crime and misery, it was the suppression of these three orders and the unjust privileges they entailed. The first work of the Royalists, who were anxious to consolidate the throne, should have been to reassure the people; as it was, they seized every opportunity of frightening it with this ghost of the *ancien régime*, which many of

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them had ceased to believe in. In any case, in order to obtain a ministry capable of carrying out this retrograde programme, it was first of all necessary to clear the ground. To this end Chateaubriand and the *ultras* joined the extreme Left. This extraordinary alliance was maintained in the most risky circumstances. Thus eighty votes of the Right contributed to the election of Grégoire the regicide. To be sure, the assassination of the Duc de Berri caused a great deal of very sincere emotion, the more so as nobody anticipated the posthumous birth of his son. But the Right took the most sinister advantage of this sad event. It made no attempt to disguise its all-absorbing design to overthrow Decazes; and when it had succeeded, and Decazes was replaced by Richelieu (this time determined to rely upon the Right), it was by no means satisfied. Neither was it pleased when Richelieu granted a new electoral law giving a preponderating influence to the great proprietors. It wanted to overthrow Richelieu, and in order to do this, it again joined the extreme Left, when it gave its vote to the reply to the speech from the throne. This address, which was most injurious to the

King's interest, he treated with the cool, proud dignity which characterised him.

The Right relied upon two secret, or quasi-secret, organisations: one was the *Congrégation*, the other that sort of occult government in which Monsieur, the King's brother, was the moving spirit. The *Congrégation* dated from the Revolution. In the time when public worship was forbidden, its object was to facilitate for the faithful the practice of their religion. Its character changed from the moment when Napoleon laid violent hands on the Pope and held him prisoner. This anxiety to defend Catholicism was then tempered with policy. At the Restoration the Comte d'Artois and the Royalist *intransigeants* became members of the society, and policy took precedence of religion in the minds of all good Congregationists. As for the little occult Government, it originated in the abuses so wantonly re-established in 1814, which placed at Monsieur's disposal the distribution of appointments and salaries. This prince had a council permanently sitting in his neighbourhood, with a chancellor and several functionaries, drawing large emoluments, with no ostensible functions. This council had

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some sort of *raison d'être* before the Revolution, since Monsieur had then an *apanage* to administer. But in 1814 Monsieur had no longer an *apanage*; nevertheless, he was allowed to re-establish his council, in which were placed, "very advantageously for them," says Pasquier in his *Mémoires*, "a great number of courtiers old and new." At the beginning of the Restoration, the National Guard constituted in the hands of the Comte d'Artois and his friends yet another instrument of propaganda. The prince was its nominal head, with the somewhat singular title of *Colonel-général*. His staff kept up a correspondence in his name with the Inspectors-general; there was one of these for each department. They were chosen with the greatest care, and distributed to numerous agents the secret orders and special instructions received from Paris; the object being political more often than military. When Louis decided to withdraw his brother from the supreme command of the National Guard, of which he had made such an extraordinary use, the organisation persisted, weakened, no doubt, but still effective. To the very last the "Pavillon Marsan" (the part of Tuileries

inhabited by Monsieur) kept on interfering in the policy of the kingdom. Its intervention in home policy was frequently most ill-timed, as abroad it was sometimes the reverse of patriotic. It was from the "Pavillon Marsan," at the time of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, that proceeded the famous *Note Secrète*, addressed by Baron de Vitrolles to the Foreign Powers, painting, for their benefit, the state of the kingdom in the most terrifying colours, at the risk of preventing the liberation of territory which Richelieu was about to negotiate at Aix-la-Chapelle. Happily the sovereigns considered that Richelieu's word was better than that of the exalted gentleman who addressed them. Louis XVIII., who had the very highest sense of the national dignity, deeply resented this contemptible behaviour, and withdrew Vitrolles from the honorary functions which had given him access to Monsieur.

At the same period the diplomatic body had a habit of frequent interference with public affairs. The Ambassadors of the four Powers (as England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia were still called) used to hold meetings, which constituted a sort of council of supervision, very displeasing to the King and his

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Ministers. This custom afterwards lapsed ; but the Right frequently encouraged Ambassadors to depart from the reserve imposed on them by their functions. At the Congress of Laybach, besides the official plenipotentiaries, there appeared (not at the actual sittings, but in the social reunions) M. de Jouffroi, the agent of the "Pavillon Marsan," who discussed with the Emperor of Russia the utility of "enfeebling the constitutional Governments of the Continent."

The Right openly entertained retrograde theories. "In the matter of Education," says Chancellor Pasquier, "two fixed ideas dominated the most exalted sections of the Royalist faction : one, that very little education was necessary for the people ; the other, that this little should be given to it by the clergy." Nothing very serious or very astonishing in that, we may say. Education is spread in spite of the efforts of obscurantists. But it was astonishing to see a whole party deliberately labouring to make itself unpopular, to raise obstacles between itself and public opinion, and compromise by imprudence and absolutely futile violence the cause it wished to serve and the principles it meant to defend.

Such was the state of the Right under the Restoration. What about the Left? Prevost Paradol, a severe critic, opposes its "mauvaise foi" to the "maladresse" of the Right, thereby implying that it was by far the guiltier of the two. Thureau-Dangin accuses it "d'avoir joué la comédie de l'opposition légale." Perhaps these reproaches are unnecessarily harsh. It is not easy to apply them to a party which counted among its ranks a man like Général Foy, with his exquisite sense of honour and of constitutional right, who nevertheless was responsible for some of its errors. He may have been a little blind, but assuredly he was not one to "jouer la comédie."

The truth is that the action of the Left was a hundred times more important than that of the Right. One helped to weaken the Restoration, the other did more—it prepared the way for all the moral revolutions to come; it revived Bonapartism under its most disastrous form; it did its best to sow the seeds of insubordination in the Army and of insurrection among civilians; and it is my firm conviction that many of its members had no idea what they were about.

How, only a few years after the fall of the

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Empire, there arose that extraordinary legend which in the eyes of a large section of the French people transformed Napoleon into the champion of liberty and peace, is one of the most interesting psychological problems in history. Such an audacious fiction could have little hold on the generation which had known the Emperor. But the generation which followed was in a manner nursed in this fiction, and it stuck to it. It was this that made the nation so ready to restore the Empire and help Napoleon III. to the throne. The captivity of St. Helena, the silence of the death on that rock hidden in the wastes of the great sea—these things were so impressive an end to Napoleon's tragic destiny that they at once threw over him the glamour of a half-mythical hero in the popular imagination. That great memory served the interests of party too well for the opposition to miss the chance of appropriating it to its own ends. Unfortunately the opposition preached the benefits of liberty, and Napoleon had been a despot; the opposition tended to fraternity among the nations, and Napoleon had been their oppressor. But there are ways of squaring the truth. Somebody made the great discovery that

Napoleon desired to subjugate the world in order to deliver it. He made war in order to enforce peace, and enlisted men to discipline them in the practice of liberty. Unknown is the name of the genius who published this theory; but his work did not perish. His views were repeated, timidly at first, as an audacious paradox with only a grain of truth in it. Then public opinion in the lower classes got used to the idea. The grotesqueness shocked them no longer. Democrats, Republicans, or even Liberals, gravely accompanied the Jacobins in their periodical pilgrimages to the Vendôme Column. A new Napoleon dominated France, sung in prose and verse, glorified in every conceivable way—a man perhaps a little uncertain in his temper, but full of generous impulses, who adored the people, only lived to make it happy, and had not succeeded because he had fallen a victim to kings, priests, and nobles.

The men of the Revolution participated in this unforeseen hero-worship. They had been the forerunners of Napoleon. No doubt they had been guilty of faults, not to say violences (their crimes were no longer mentioned), but they were full of great thoughts and noble

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aspirations, and it was circumstances over which they had no control which carried these generous patriots further than they had meant to go. And so on. In their blindness the Liberals helped to mislead both themselves and public opinion by deafening the ears of France with their eternal panegyrics of the men and the institutions most directly hostile to liberty. Their clumsy error surpassed that of the *ultras*, though its consequences took longer to develop and were not so soon perceived.

As for that love of mystery, that mania for Machiavelism, which I have shown to be characteristic of the French deputy, the Right contrived to satisfy it by means of the *Congrégation* and the occult Government, the Left by military conspiracies. From the moment when the Liberals (and under this title I include the entire Left) took their stand on Bonapartism they were bound to turn their attention to the Army. Was not the Army the instrument and, so to speak, the symbol of the Empire? Only when politicians turn their attention to the Army their aim is more often to unsettle it than to maintain discipline, the more so when we have

to do with a party which preaches emancipation, equality, the rights of man, and contempt for the traditional hierarchy.

The reaction which occurred in 1820, at the time of the assassination of the Duc de Berri, seemed to scatter the last remnants of the fitful wisdom of the Left. La Fayette was then heard to declare solemnly to the Tribune that he considered himself "released" from his oath. Released from his oath, because the King, in accordance with the Constitution, had yielded to the will of the Chamber in replacing his moderate Ministry by one more distinctly Royalist! What could be more insane? This appeal to revolt, absurd and unjustifiable as it was, had a widespread effect. It was followed by others specially addressed to the young students in the University; as for the Army, it was openly invited to join the conspiracy. There had been some plotting already, but this was a serious affair. It was denounced to the Government. Inquiry revealed the existence of three secret committees, one of which, led by the Duc de Rovigo, had in view the proclamation of Napoleon II. and the regency of Prince Eugène; the two others, under the

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influence of La Fayette, aimed only at the organisation of a general insurrection and a provisional Government. The General was not arrested; that was a mistake. He continued to lend his support to other attempts of the kind, and military conspiracies multiplied. They were set on foot in the School of Cavalry at Saumur, in Belfort, and La Rochelle. Their aim was obvious. Napoleon II., brought up in Austria, and deprived of all communication with his country, was an Unknown, all the more dangerous because his reign would have necessitated a regency; the Duc d'Orléans, who had more or less effaced himself, would not have seemed popular enough for a candidate. Some fanatics who were in communication with the Prince of Orange attempted to thrust him into this position; he lent himself to their designs very improperly, and later on betrayed them by giving their names to Charles X. As for the Republic, it was not yet possible; it took years to separate that name from the horrors which at that time it conjured up. The stupefaction of France when the Republic of 1848 was proclaimed shows how remote was that idea from the dreams of 1824. La

Fayette in his *Mémoires* (vol. v.), declares, with an incomparable *naïveté*, that he had no other end but to bring about the meeting of a *constituante* which in all probability would have upheld the Constitutional Monarchy. So it would seem that all this apparatus of destruction aimed at the maintenance of what already existed!

The political situation was still further complicated by the absence of any middle party capable of lessening the friction between Left and Right. The germs of such a party existed in the section that was beginning to be known as the *doctrinaires*, but the very name shows in what respect it would be incapable of playing with any plasticity an independent rôle. If a desire for vengeance against the Revolution animated the *ultras*, if an unquenchable thirst for popularity urged the leaders of the Liberal side to depart from their rôle and hurl about imprudent language, the *doctrinaires* were a prey to the most formidable vanity. They had the very highest possible opinion of themselves, and professed to act according to the most superior principles, whereas they were too frequently governed by the suggestions of their *amour-propre*.

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The writings of Royer-Collard, and Guizot's pamphlet, *Des Moyens de Gouvernement et d'Opposition en l'état actuel de la France* (published in 1821), with its bitter spirit of contempt, show the incapacity of the *doctrinaires* to offer any durable support to any Government whatever.

Such was the state of the Parliament from 1816 to 1824. That it did not overturn more Cabinets was owing to the fragmentary character of the various parties, and to the personal animosities which permitted the Cabinet to find, now here, now there, a visionary and fluctuating support, while it accomplished its perpetual work of equilibrium. If any good and useful laws were passed it was owing to the talent of the Ministers, to their frank eloquence, to their individual influence over the Chamber. As for the House of Peers, it showed, as a rule, great wisdom and moderation in its acts and its language, and much was to be hoped from it.

One question still remains: What were the people thinking all the time? For in order to realise the character of this period, we must bear in mind that the deputies were not the representatives of the people, but of the

bourgeois class. At moments of crisis, even if the people had no part in the Government, its attitude sufficiently revealed its sentiments. It was not difficult to determine its state of mind in 1814 and 1815. In 1824 this is not quite so easy. Nobody appealed to it; not one of the Liberals ever dreamt of considering its needs, and public affairs apparently did not concern it. All the same, the people had its own opinion; only the Parliament and the Press prevented it from making that opinion clear. But the credit of France was restored; agriculture and industry prospered; the first Exhibition of the products of industry at Paris had met with the greatest success; a General Council of Commerce, a free School of Arts and Crafts had been established; by his courageous initiative, Louis XVIII. had arrested a pernicious reaction in 1816. True, that reaction had reappeared in 1820, but far less violently, and since then the King had been able to continue the good work begun. All this was reassuring and significant; the country was enjoying a delightful time of peace and stability; only the language used every day in the Tribune and the journals went far to destroy the good effects of this

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visible prosperity. If we are to believe the deputies and the journalists, peace had been bought at the price of national dishonour; the Government was "sold to the foreigner"; the blackest designs were meditated by the King and his Councillors—no less than the confiscation of national property, the restoration of the privileges and the *corvée* of the *ancien régime*; the Charter and representative Government were nothing but a deceptive lure, destined to disappear at the least expected moment, and so on. There was no Government Press, properly speaking; the few journals that defended the Government did so with a nervous awkwardness. The French Press was still without experience, and as opposition is easier to do than anything else, the opposition journals were the more numerous and more brilliant; moreover, truth and justice being the virtues least esteemed by their editors, they exercised a disastrous influence.

From all this it resulted that the people, though satisfied, preserved a secret feeling of distrust; the accusations which arose on all sides against the Monarchy prolonged the effect of the Hundred Days, and prevented it

from recovering the prestige of 1814, or giving the same impression of secure stability as before.

In 1824, however, a great step was made in this direction. The military conspiracies had come to an end, the Army was loyal and faithful, the prestige of the nation abroad had considerably increased, and it was about to see the reign of Louis XVIII. close and that of Charles X. begin in peace—an object-lesson not repeated in the course of the century. This happy state of things which restored France to her former high rank among the nations was mainly due to the recent Spanish War.

The foreign policy of the Restoration has been the object of many bitter criticisms. To be sure, the Congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), of Troppau (1820), of Laybach (1821), and Verona (1822) were organised by Metternich and the Emperor Alexander (who was becoming more and more disgusted with his former Liberalism and more and more inclined to an understanding with Metternich) with an intention directly hostile to the emancipation of the people; and France took her part in each Congress without adopting an attitude

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openly antagonistic to absolutism. Owing to these facts the Restoration has been accused for long enough of sympathy with the anti-Liberal policy, cried up by the Austrian Chancellor and Russian Emperor. But now that historians have access to the sources of information, official documents, *mémoires*, and so on, they are beginning to perceive that the facts were otherwise. The instructions given to ambassadors and plenipotentiaries plainly reveal a twofold anxiety to remain faithful in Germany and Italy to the old policy of Henri IV. and Richelieu, with regard to the protection and maintenance of the *petits Etats*, and at the same time to favour as far as possible the development of public liberty. Words are too often the medium of exchange with politicians, and this is a little misleading to historians. In Spain there was the so-called Constitution of 1812, which, though harmless in itself, was far too democratic to be applied to any people like the Spaniards, the Neapolitans, or the Piedmontese, who had still to learn their first steps in the ways of democracy. In this world everything is the result of a slow process of evolution; and it is obvious that, for instance, the Constitution

which suits our Third Republic at the present day could not have ruled France in 1824 without serious consequences. In Italy, however, Naples and Turin arose in revolt to cries of "Vive la Constitution Espagnole de 1812!" and in Spain, at the same time, this Constitution, re-established by the Revolutionists, and imposed by them on Ferdinand VII., caused all manner of disorder in the country. Now, in the face of Austria and Russia, who desired to re-establish absolute monarchy all over Europe, France continued to insist that the famous Constitution of 1812 should be replaced by a Charter modelled on the wise principles of her own Charter. Nothing, indeed, could be more desirable. One thing only was to be regretted—that France and England could not come to a common understanding on this point. Their ambassadors spoke independently, without any previous agreement; but with this reservation it must be recognised that the various French representatives invariably expressed themselves with regard to the Greeks, the Italians, and the Poles, in moderate and reasonable language.

There remains the war with Spain. Indubitably it arose from a false principle—

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the right of one nation to interfere with the affairs of another, which if generally recognised becomes the surest possible source of tyranny and injustice. But we can easily understand why the Royal Government decided to interfere, conscious as it was of a resolve to display moderation in the first place, and knowing also that the war was a matter of life or death to it. Curiously enough the man who most clearly saw this necessity was Châteaubriand, whose political perspicuity had hitherto been almost invariably at fault. He realised perfectly that the Monarchy would never be founded until the Army should have won some victory, or carried through some successful campaign under the white standard, and with a prince at its head. The justice of this idea might be seen when the extreme Left, especially its Bonapartist and Jacobin members, defined their attitude. That attitude was shameful. Not only did men like Carrel, the celebrated journalist, cast aside all notions of duty to go and enrol themselves in the Spanish Army and fight against their own countrymen, but in the ranks of the French Army everything was done to provoke desertion and revolt. The passage of the Bidassoa

was dramatic. The French exiles were waiting in troops on the banks of the river, with their great tricolours, under the command of Colonel Fabvier, who called on the Army to desert the white standard ; they sang Bérenger's disgraceful song, " Soldats ! Demitour à gauche !" It was a solemn moment. The officer present in command of the Army was an old servant of the Empire. He unhesitatingly gave the order to fire ; no less unhesitatingly the soldiers obeyed. That cannonade was historical ; its roar resounded far beyond our frontiers. The Restoration might count its cause gained, since the Army would not betray it ; the Army was loyal ! The Liberals were dumb with amazement ; the opposition was apparently to be annihilated, and of military conspiracies nothing more was heard. Carrel himself, when he could form a saner judgment of these things, said later, in writing of the war in Spain : " Probably there never was under the Empire an Army of one hundred thousand men better disciplined, or so well instructed." And Canning gave it the same high praise when he said that no army had ever done so little harm or prevented more.

These fine results were in a great measure

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owing to the Duc d'Angoulême. This time, not being on political ground, he was not restrained by his exaggerated filial respect. He had ample freedom, and he used it with remarkable prudence and perseverance, and an absolute sense of justice and honour. He chose his staff with a supreme indifference to coteries, and having fixed upon General Guilleminot, an old Imperialist, for his Major-General, he contrived to support him through thick and thin. No pressure ever moved this prince. Just as in trying to pacify the South in 1815, he had persistently displayed his anxiety to treat Protestant clergymen with the same respect as the Catholic priests, so now he showed that no consideration of birth or opinion could influence his judgment of an officer. Under his command the operations of war were well directed (the taking of the Trocadero, a success systematically underrated by the opposition, deserves a high rank among our feats of arms). But the operations of peace were even better conducted. Wherever the French Army went it brought with it order, toleration, and justice. The celebrated Ordinance of Andujar, published by the Duc d'Angoulême on the 18th of August,

was not the least of his many titles to glory ; it authorised the French commandants to set at liberty every person unjustly arrested. When Ferdinand VII. was liberated, and had recovered his independence, the Duc d'Angoulême urged him to proclaim a Liberal Constitution and a general amnesty, bitterly regretting his inability to do this himself. But he had no illusions as to what he had to expect from a weak, deceitful, and cruel King like Ferdinand VII. On his return the prince refused to be feted at Madrid, but paid long visits to the French troops stationed from one end of Spain to the other, giving many evidences of his solicitude for the Army. One of the good results of this war was that it threw full light on the future heir to the throne, the man who then seemed destined to become Louis XIX. Unhappily his excess of modesty and filial reverence caused him, in 1830, to add his abdication to that of his father, with disastrous consequences to France.

The instructions which Villèle had given to the French plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Verona entailed, besides the reduction of the Austrian army of occupation at Naples, the evacuation of Piedmont and the guarantees

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for the revolted Greeks, the recognition of those Spanish colonies which were already constituted separate States, together with their commercial liberty. At least these benefits were secured by our initiative (Feb. 1824). Unfortunately the success won by the Army in Spain, and the tremendous impression it caused in the country and abroad, had the effect of exciting the *ultras* to the extent that they believed they could do anything. Villèle had not the qualities capable of resisting them. He took it into his head to dissolve the Chamber, hoping thus to get rid both of the opposition of the Left and the still more passionate antagonism of the Right. Without the least shame he brought a very dubious pressure to bear on the electors. As it happened, his calculations were upset. The success of the Royalists was overwhelming, but many of them were of the number of those very lunatics whose leader he was, whom, in spite of that fact, he desired to throw out, so much he feared their extravagance. It is said that a hundred and twenty new deputies were members of the *Congrégation*. The act known as the Law of *Septennalité* was passed by the new Chamber and by the Peers. Up till then

a fifth part of the Chamber was changed every year, and there were obvious disadvantages in a system which kept the country in a permanent state of agitation. On the other hand, seven years was perhaps rather a long interval.

It was in the midst of these events that Louis XVIII. died. Old and ill, but sustained by his intense moral energy, he had continued to reign and to govern. If we try to imagine what France might have been then, not taking into account the Hundred Days, her position in 1824 may leave something to be desired ; but allowing for that event, it strikes us as exceptionally brilliant. We have only to look at the comments which the King's death gave rise to abroad to be convinced of this. Even those who at that time looked backward on the past were astonished at the ground travelled over. But we are in a better position than contemporaries for forming a generalised judgment of that period, and I have no hesitation in forming mine. The King and his Ministers, almost without exception, did their duty by France. The parties failed in theirs. Therein lay the danger for the future.

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT JUGGLING OF 1830

"CHARLES X. must take care of this child's crown," said Louis XVIII. on his death-bed, as he laid his hand on the head of the little Duc de Bordeaux. The foreboding implied in this warning was not felt by the old King alone ; it was partly shared by public opinion, not only in France, but abroad. To judge by the case of the Comte d'Artois, it seemed impossible that Charles X. could keep his crown, even if he succeeded in governing for a little while ; but, as it happened, the prophets of evil were wrong. They were not mistaken in the King ; his very ordinary character was supplemented by a very ordinary intellect. They were mistaken in the nation. They had forgotten the happy results of the preceding reign. It is not always the sower who reaps ; Charles X. was to reap what Louis XVIII.

had sown. They had also forgotten that the new sovereign had some advantages which his brother had not, advantages to which France is peculiarly sensitive. He was amiable, he was cheerful, his manner was a happy mixture of personal charm and kingly majesty. He was never at a loss for the apt or witty word which is a sure passport to popular favour. In spite of his age, he had preserved the light build and the activity of youth, and when he showed himself on horseback at the head of his troops, surrounded by a staff no less brilliant than himself, Charles X. was greeted with enthusiastic acclamations. He had longed for them, and he was immensely pleased when they came. His brief day of popularity in 1814 had left behind it an extinguishably delightful memory; but his thirst for admiration was honest, and it served the interests of the country. It would give the French people a hold on their King, and enable them to undo the effects of his terrible obstinacy.

That obstinacy was engaged from 1824 to 1828 in supporting the Villèle Ministry, which Ministry he abandoned when he perceived that it was endangering his popularity,

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and accepted Martignac, a Liberal. And then he found himself so popular that he thought he could do anything he pleased; so he realised his long-cherished desire of entrusting power to his favourite Polignac. We shall see how the insurrection provoked by that Minister became a revolution.

The laws proposed by the Villèle Ministry, after the accession of Charles X., would have been quite enough to weaken a *régime* with a less inviolate and venerable principle behind it. Under the increasing pressure of the *ultras*, the Cabinet proposed, first, the ridiculous law of sacrilege, by which special penalties were instituted for robberies committed in churches. (That law was obviously based on the doctrine of the Real Presence, and thus dogma was introduced into legislation.) Then came the law opening a credit of a thousand millions of francs to indemnify the *émigrés*; it was a wise measure in itself, and as it in a manner sanctioned the confiscations of the Revolution, it was calculated to reassure the holders of so-called "national property"; but the public discussion of it also helped to revive all the old passions and grievances of the past. Lastly, there was the "Droit

d'Ainesse," which decreed that the eldest son of wealthy families should have the advantage if the testator had expressed no wish to the contrary. In the existing state of things, seeing that the nation had a passion for equal inheritance as established by the Revolution, such a law came like a blow in its face.

But all these measures, even the consecration of the King in the cathedral at Rheims, the superannuated title of Dauphin bestowed upon the Duc d'Angoulême, and other little anachronisms of the kind, were not enough to turn the nation's discontent into downright hostility against the throne. True, the nation was more or less reassured by seeing the magistrature, the Institut, and, above all, the Chamber of Peers—that hereditary and aristocratic power—constituting themselves the defenders of moderation and a wise Liberalism. The Upper Chamber had already mitigated some of the strong measures voted by the Deputies when it forced the Cabinet to withdraw a Draconian law destined to sweep clean, not to say annihilate, the Press. That evening Paris was illuminated amid cries of "Vive le Roi ! Vivent les Pairs !"

The censure of the Press was restored by

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way of retaliation for this failure (June 1827); but it was well known that the Duc d'Angoulême, the heir to the throne, who at this time took part with his father in the Ministerial councils, had plainly declared himself against the measure. It was not forgotten that after his accession Charles X. had, by his own authority, suppressed this very law passed by Villèle in the latter months of Louis XVIII.'s reign. So it was to the Minister, and not to the King, that the grudge was owing. The dissolution of the National Guard had been for the Parisian *bourgeoisie* (of which it was almost entirely composed) a still severer blow. On the 29th of April the King reviewed the National Guard on horseback in the Champ de Mars, when he was received with mingled cries of "Vive le Roi! À bas Villèle!" The next day this outburst of political emotion was punished with an order for dissolution.

Nevertheless, when in the autumn of the same year Charles X. visited the camp at Saint Omer, and made a tour of the principal towns in the North of France, he was greeted with enthusiastic loyalty. Shortly afterwards news arrived of the glorious battle of Navarino, which gave Greece her independence, and

threw new splendour on our Navy. Villèle now thought that the time had come to steady his tottering power. He obtained an order from the King for the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies and the creation of no less than seventy-six peers. This last measure was designed to modify the majority in the Upper Chamber.

What happened then is noteworthy. Nothing could better show the amazing and rapid progress of monarchical stability since the death of Louis XVIII.; it went hand in hand with the development of a political sense in the electoral body. Villèle brought a lively pressure to bear on the electors; administrative centralisation gave him the means and he had no scruples in using them. In spite of that, the Ministry obtained only 170 seats; the Extreme Right 70; and the Left 180. On the other hand, it was felt that the new peers, some of whom had been rather unhappily chosen, so far from exercising any influence on their colleagues, were influenced by them in the most wholesome manner, and were changed by contact with that chastened and moderate *milieu*. At Paris something very like a revolt broke out, and professional agitators suddenly

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appeared on the scene. They had always been there, but now it seemed that they had lost much of their determination and self-confidence. The revolt was easily suppressed. At last an obscure pamphleteer, called Cauchois-Lemaire, published an appeal to the Duc d'Orleans, in which he adjured this Prince to form some sort of government in place of the Bourbon *régime*; he only succeeded in raising an explosion of indignant protestation felt by all parties. Thus, after three years and a half (September 1824 to December 1827) of a policy disapproved by the majority, the nation showed no sign of disaffection to the throne. Nothing but a slight coolness in the attitude of the crowd when in the presence of its sovereign—and this chiefly in Paris. But it was quite enough to grieve the monarch. It made him inclined to refuse his support to the proposals of Villèle; Villèle, who clung to power in a very undignified fashion, to keep himself in office would have thought nothing of another dissolution of the Chamber; instead of that he had to resign, having remained seven years in office.

In January 1828 M. de Martignac became Prime Minister. In MM. Roy, Portalis, and

La Ferronays (Minister of Foreign Affairs), he found distinguished collaborators. He himself was a man of great merit. His good sense, his integrity, his clear intellect, were helped by his fascinating personality. There was an irresistible charm both in the things he said and in the manner of the saying. Up to that time almost unknown, he soon made his individuality felt in the Parliament and the country, and he succeeded in holding office for eighteen months. Such a career seemed most unlikely at the beginning of his Ministry, which bid fair to be a very ephemeral one. It has been said that M. de Martignac was even less known to his King than to his colleagues, and that the King was mistaken when he chose him on account of his opinions. This is the less likely seeing that Martignac was hardly in office before he easily obtained the King's consent to measures which plainly showed how far the Cabinet had changed its point of view. M. Guizot and M. Cousin were allowed to begin again their lectures at the Sorbonne. Villemain and Chateaubriand recovered their salaries which had been withdrawn. Moderate instructions were issued to all functionaries; seventeen prefects were

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dismissed, others suspended ; finally, Parliament was presented with a Liberal law in favour of the Press.

Still more amazing was the religious policy of the Cabinet. First roughly handled by the Revolution, then severely restricted by Napoleon, religion had been reduced to the level of a public institution, like the Board of Works or the Post Office. A reaction in its favour could not fail to arise ; it arose about 1848, and it might have arisen any time after 1815 but for the disastrous alliance, by which "the throne and the altar" managed to compromise each other. Clergy and noblesse, victims alike of the Revolution, joined together in mutual adulation and support. The religious orders, at any rate the more active and powerful of them, worked hard to repair their fortunes. The experiment was enough to make Voltaire turn in his grave. It so happened that an anti-religious tendency set in, and it grew. The extraordinary indiscretions of the other side helped to strengthen it; notably the interference of the *Congrégation* in political matters. The most absurd fictions have been invented on this subject, there being no limit to the credulity of the public.

But if no historian can take these exaggerations seriously, neither can he accept the disclaimers of the interested party. The truth being that the clergy and the Jesuits interfered enormously, and their pretensions were at times intolerable.

What seems to have roused to the utmost the national discontent was the part that the King took in the religious ceremonies. Louis XVIII. had been more or less sceptical, not to say Voltairian, in his views; Charles X. saw fit to follow the processions from one end of his capital to the other, and Villèle admits, in his *Mémoires*, that the Parisians were much pained by this spectacle of their sovereign "walking in humility behind the priests." What was odd, this quarrel was with the priests rather than the King. The unpopularity of the Jesuits became such that the name of Jesuit served as a handy weapon of abuse among the lowest classes and even the *bourgeoisie*. An enraged man could fling no more opprobrious epithet at his neighbour.

Curious to relate, the same hand that so devoutly held the sacred candle, signed, at the proposal of Martignac, and without very many scruples of its own, the famous Ordinances of

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1828. They were countersigned, it is true, by a Liberal prelate, Monseigneur Feutrier, Bishop of Beauvais, who had then become Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in the place of Monseigneur Frayassinous. The Ordinances of the 16th of June, 1828, aimed at regulating the small seminaries, institutions where, in every diocese, the young men destined for the priesthood were prepared for their office. Seven of those small seminaries had passed into the hands of the Jesuits, whose order had formerly been suppressed in France and had not been re-established by law. Their position was therefore illegal. The Ordinances placed the seminaries under the control of the University, and provided that the directors and professors were not to be attached to "any unauthorised Congregation." This amounted to the exclusion of the Jesuits, and the measure was immensely applauded. But the Bishops, who were nearly all anti-Liberals, united to oppose it; they refused to submit to the Ordinances. The Government very cleverly obtained a brief from the Pope requiring them to do so. Charles X. does not seem to have hesitated as to his duty on this occasion; when the Cardinal of Clermont-Tonnerre persisted in his opposition

—holding by the motto of his house, “*Etiam si omnes, ego non*”—the King forbade him to appear in his presence.

Not long after, on the 17th of August (1828), by virtue of an agreement concluded in London a month before, 14,000 men embarked at Toulon for Greece. They soon took Patras and occupied the whole of the Morea. The expedition was accompanied by a scientific commission, which had the honour of being the first to ransack the spoils of Olympia. France was thus still more deeply pledged to the work of Greek emancipation. In her foreign as in her home policy, she showed herself, officially speaking, Liberal. The King soon reaped the advantage of his attitude. While the Duchesse de Berry, on her way through Vendée, Bordelais, and the departments of the south, met with the most flattering reception, Charles X. and the Duc d'Angoulême also made their progress through the east of France. Liberal Alsace gave the King a triumphal welcome; the journey was one unbroken ovation, and in every town the deputies of the Left took a warm part in the demonstrations. One of their number could declare, amid the plaudits of the Chamber,

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that "henceforth the Bourbon Government was incontestable, and that revolution was no longer possible."

At the opening of the next Session (January 1829) the Speech from the Throne proved to be a masterpiece of discretion and propriety. From the list of three candidates, presented to him by the deputies, the King again nominated as their president Royer-Collard, the *doctrinaire* who was the incarnation of fidelity to the Charter. Finally, the Ministry proposed the law so long demanded, which was to organise the Communal and Departmental Councils. Under the Empire these Councils were only composed of members nominated by the Government, and this belated form of legislation was still flourishing. By Martignac's programme the Councils were to be elective, only reserving to the King the nomination of the mayors. No more honest and decisive measure had yet been passed in the course of democratic progress. At first the Liberals applauded the benevolent action of the Government; but, inconceivable as it may seem, this feeling was not of long duration. In the Chamber of 1829 parties were more split up than they had ever been before; they had no

leaders, and consequently no discipline. A mischievous and violent Press, that mistook *intransigeance* for strength and carping for cleverness, picked holes in every clause of the proposed measure, and did its work so thoroughly that failure seemed certain, and the Bill had to be withdrawn. Again, as in the time of Louis XVIII., it was the Government that did its duty and the parties that failed in theirs. History, at least, has avenged Martignac. All the great Liberals—Guizot, Duvergier de Hauranne, even Dupin and Odilon-Barrot—have acknowledged in their *Mémoires* that they were collaborators in a tremendous blunder.

The failure was not so much the failure of a Bill as the failure of a policy; the King, if he had stood resolutely by his Ministers, could have given them the time and the means to recover their position; but he never dreamt of such a thing. If, in the most unexpected manner, he had grown a little wiser in the exercise of supreme power, he could not rise to the idea of equilibrium which had inspired his brother; he could not acquire a sense of policy which was not in him. He only understood one thing—that Martignac and

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his colleagues had no majority in the Chamber, and that henceforth he, Charles, could use his popularity with the country to summon his favourite to his side.

The Prince de Polignac was loyal and disinterested enough, but he suffered from a prodigious lack of intelligence; he had, however, while Ambassador in London, won a great deal of sympathy, notably that of Wellington. It was partly at Polignac's suggestion that the pernicious Droit d'Aînesse had been proposed. Observing the considerable rôle played by the territorial aristocracy in England, he had innocently imagined that nothing would be easier than to have the same sort of thing in France. His *naïveté* was the more formidable by reason of the mysticism in which he was steeped. He believed himself to be inspired by Heaven in direct answer to prayer. No man in France was more unpopular than he. His very recent profession of attachment to the Charter could not undo the fact that, in 1815, he had refused to support it. Moreover, as everybody was aware of the affection which Charles X. felt for him, the Press had long ago prophesied the formation of a Polignac

Ministry, which it represented as an inevitable *Coup d'Etat*, a direct attempt on public liberty.

The Ministry was formed in August 1829, and everybody looked out for the prophesied *Coup d'Etat*. None came; and for the best of reasons. The change of Government had been made in a remarkable manner; there never was such an incoherent jumble of proper names. Cheek by jowl with Polignac sat La Bourdonnaye, the typical *émigré*, conspicuous by his violence, and General de Bourmont, who had been accused of having abandoned his division on the very morning of Waterloo to join Louis XVIII. at Gand. But, on the other hand, Baron de Haussez, a Moderate, had been chosen for the Navy on the refusal of Admiral de Rigny, an advanced Liberal; portfolios had been given with magnificent impartiality to Chabrol and Courvoisier, who belonged, respectively, to the Right and Left Centres. Finally, when La Bourdonnaye retired, Guernon-Ranville, who was known to be equally attached to the King and to the Charter, entered the Ministry. It was only a year later that Chabrol and Courvoisier were replaced by two *exaltés*.

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The presence of such men was a certain pledge that nothing would be done contrary to the Charter; and, indeed, Polignac meditated no illicit adventure of the kind. In a beatitude of self-satisfaction he imagined that, on the contrary, he had united these discordant elements very skilfully; and he dreamed, moreover, of accomplishing great things abroad. In fact, the situation was unique. After the Treaty of Adrianople, signed on the 14th of September (1829), the alliance of France was simultaneously solicited by Russia and by England, then in agreement with Austria. We were in a position to choose, with the certainty that on either side we had an equal chance of a speedy amendment of the treaties of 1815. The taking of Algiers somewhat strained our relations with England; so it was towards Russia that our policy had to incline. To do Polignac justice he felt this, and prepared to act accordingly. As for the King, in the joy of possessing a Ministry after his own heart, he asked nothing but that it might last, and he was ready, if necessary, to sacrifice the ideas if he could only keep the men of his choice.

But the nation could not be expected to

know these things. During the end of 1829, and the beginning of 1830, the great topic in the journals, and the groups of the Right and Left, was the *Coup d'Etat*, and the various ways in which it might be accomplished. Nobody talked about anything else. If the result had not been so serious there would have been some humour in the spectacle of a nation obstinately crediting its Government with all manner of dangerous projects, which had never entered into its head, and in a measure foisting them on it whether it would or no. Having made up their minds that the deputies would not be convoked, that the Budget would not be carried, and that taxes would be levied by a simple Ordinance (an illegal measure, if it came to that), the Liberals went about excitedly forming leagues in the provinces, and generally organising themselves all over the country with a view to resisting the taxes thus scandalously imposed. But the Chambers were convoked in the most regular manner, to the surprise of everybody who was looking out for the famous *Coup d'Etat*.

Now two lines of conduct were open to the Opposition: either to wait for the proposals

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of the Ministry and reject them one by one, or refuse to support it absolutely and *a priori* by inserting a clause to this effect in the answer to the Speech from the Throne. A more experienced party would have adopted the former course without hesitation ; the Left adopted the latter. It was the honester and the clearer course, but it had this disadvantage, that it precipitated the conflict, and caused the King to be mixed up in it. Otherwise the Address was couched in the most respectful language, and was very well drawn up. But it positively insisted on a change of Ministry.

Charles X., whose Speech from the Throne had been unnecessarily irritating in its tone, at once took up the challenge. He had a certain militant temperament that even age had not subdued. The very next morning he announced to his Ministers his resolution to prorogue the Chambers till the 1st of September ; it was now the 17th of March (1830). The dissolution of the Chamber seemed inevitable ; although the Ministers were by no means agreed upon that point, the King was determined, and the dispute became more and more his private quarrel.

Thus it was at the Court and in the neighbourhood of the Palace that anxiety was most intense. The frequenters of the Tuileries felt a lively alarm ; so did the Ministers, strangely enough. The majority of them had no illusions on the subject, and several remained at their posts as a point of honour. But there were many deputies and officials, especially in the provinces, who by no means shared these apprehensions. Fear grew fainter as it reached the lower ranks of society, the great body of the people remaining cool and tranquil.

The watchword of the Liberals was re-election of the 221 deputies who had voted for the Address. The elections took place on the 23rd of June and the 4th and 5th of July, and their result was decisive : 270 of the Opposition to 145 Ministerials. In many towns the results hostile to the Cabinet were proclaimed amid cries of "*Vive le Roi!*" and even M. Guizot wrote that in that Chamber of 415 members there were not 50 who desired a change of dynasty.

It was certainly not for want of hearing about the English Revolution of 1688. Writers of the Opposition had been harping

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on this theme since 1820, but without any great success. It had been taken up with frenzy by a young man, hitherto unknown, whom it is well to mention here, because of the tremendous part he was suddenly about to play. That young man was Thiers. Born at Marseilles in 1797, Thiers came to Paris with his friend Mignet in 1821, and was not long in making a place for himself in the ranks of Liberal journalism. At that time he possessed all the lightness of the typical Frenchman, without his generosity. An enormous facility for assimilating the most various subjects, a factitious but extremely seductive personality were the instruments of his egoistic vanity and boundless ambition. That ambition aimed at nothing less than the Government; to be Minister seems to have been his earliest dream. He was aware that the Restoration offered him no chance of realising it except in very remote contingencies. His constant attitude towards that *régime* was one of jealous hatred, which made him desire to see it overthrown, and help it to its downfall. Therefore he lost no opportunity of reviving the memory of 1688. It is a long-standing belief that this memory

so perseveringly evoked was a factor in the Revolution of 1830. The belief was natural, events turning out as they did. But a deeper study of the national psychology at that time does away with this idea. The date 1688 meant nothing to the people; they knew nothing about English history; they only understood one thing: that there was to be a new revolution, in which they were not in the least interested. As for the *bourgeoisie*, no encouragement could have induced it to attempt a 1688 on its own account; therefore the tendency was, amongst the advocates of a French 1688, to represent such an eventuality as ominous, and to express a pious hope that the Royal policy would not make it necessary; with the result that a French 1688 became a more terrifying thing than its advocates meant it to be. One thing is certain: under the Martignac Ministry, and in the face of the unmistakable proofs of the nation's growing loyalism, Thiers at last lost heart. Disgusted with an insignificant part in a hopeless struggle, he had asked and obtained leave to accompany an officer bound for the tour of the world on scientific service. He was on the point of starting when the

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rise of the Polignac Ministry changed his determination. The desired horizon was open to him. Only a little way, however. Up to the 29th of July he was sceptical as to the change of dynasty, in spite of Ordinances and revolt.

It was on the 26th of July that the famous Ordinances, signed the day before, appeared in the *Moniteur*, causing a fall on the Bourse of from three to four francs. To tell the truth, they hardly constituted a *Coup d'Etat*; no state of siege was proclaimed, nobody was arrested, and no troops were called out to support the evil designs of the Government. The first of the Ordinances suppressed the liberty of the Press, and to that measure, pernicious as it was, people were more or less accustomed. It was the same with the dissolution of the Chamber, proclaimed by the second Ordinance, which at the same time convoked the electors for the month of September, thus implying that at any rate there was no idea of dispensing with their support. The third Ordinance was more serious, for it completely modified the electoral law; still it is to be noted that it restored most of the regulations of 1814 relating to the composition of the Chamber, regulations

that had been afterwards modified in a larger and more liberal sense. The fourth merely recalled the majority of the members who had been removed from the Council of State for the last two years.

The Ordinances were inspired by a fatuous policy ; they were illegal, if not in the letter, at any rate in the spirit ; but it is difficult to construe them into treason or even attempt against the country. The same evening, whilst a harmless ebullition of popular feeling was going on in the street, Casimir-Périer and General Sebastiani, together with some other deputies, examined the situation, and formally expressed their opinion that one ought to abide by the letter of the law. At the same moment, Thiers was holding forth in the office of the *Constitutionnel*, and drawing up a protest exhorting the newly-elected Chamber to take no notice of the Ordinances, but to meet on the 3rd of August as if nothing had happened. The whole of the next day (27th of July) passed without bringing about any change. Printers, touched in their material interests by the suppression of several newspapers, and students, always enamoured of desperate solutions, went about stirring up the mob. Three meetings

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were held in the afternoon and evening. The deputies, together with some sections of the electors, thought of nothing but organising *la résistance légale*; there was some talk of refusing to pay a tax, as the very utmost that could be dared; there was also some idea of reorganising the old National Guard, which, though disarmed, could still muster, it was said, nearly 30,000 muskets. Those who made this proposal looked to the National Guard as a defence against a possible insurrection rather than as a weapon of offence against the Government. The Ministers resolved to proclaim a state of siege, while showing a conceited security before the King, who was all the time at St. Cloud, quietly resting.

On the morning of the 28th the professional agitators made their appearance. It was just three days since the Ordinances had been signed, two days since they had been published; and in spite of Thiers' zeal, the throne had not yet been threatened. That morning, in their walks abroad, the mob—up till then having contented itself with raising one barricade and smashing a few lamp-posts—the unemployed artisans, enthusiastic students, Republicans, and old “Carbonari,”

and everybody, in short, who had private reasons for desiring a crisis, noticed that no resistance was prepared ; therefore they fore-saw a glorious opportunity for revolt, and their hopes were kindled. They organised themselves during the night, and at dawn began the campaign. The Hôtel de Ville was guarded by sixteen men, all told. They took possession of it. An unknown hand hoisted an enormous tricolour flag on the towers of Nôtre Dame ; it was pointed out by the people below with more surprise than enthusiasm. In the presence of the deputies reassembled at the house of one of their number, General Sebastiani exclaimed that "he, for his part, would never know any national standard but the white standard." In the mouth of a representative of the Advanced Left such language was significant. The prevailing opinion in Parliamentary circles was that the King should be induced to withdraw the Ordinances and change the Ministry. Marshal Marmont, Commander of the Forces, wrote as much to the King. Charles X., still at St. Cloud, and still lulled into a sense of security, vouchsafed no answer but "Wait till to-morrow." It had been a bad day ; ill-disciplined soldiers had

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deserted in great numbers; the Royal Guard was disheartened. The city, however, remained undecided; the people were still apathetic, and the *bourgeoisie* anxious.

It was at three o'clock on the 29th that Charles X. signed the retractation of the Ordinances, and confided to the Duc de Mortemart (on account of his Liberalism, it would seem) the task of forming a Cabinet, with Casimir-Périer and General Gérard. It was consequently a Cabinet of the Left. After a violent altercation with some of the Peers, Polignac had resolved to go to St. Cloud and acquaint the King with the gravity of events. As it happened, Charles X. had been sufficiently posted up by other people; but he had obstinately refused to see the danger. When MM. de Vitrolles, de Sèmonville, and d'Argout arrived at Paris with the news, the deputies of the Left (who assembled several times a day, either at M. Lafitte's or at the house of some other of their colleagues) received it with immense satisfaction. "The majority," says Vaulabelle, "did not hesitate to find these concessions sufficient; some even went so far as to declare that they exceeded all expectation." "Superb proposals," exclaimed Sebas-

tiani, "we must accept that!" And shortly afterwards M. Lafitte, who for his part greatly wished to see a change of dynasty, remarked to M. de Laborde, "Well, the thing is settled, the Duc de Mortemart is President of the Council; and Gérard and Périer are Ministers."

And so the King and the Parliament were about to come to an agreement. But since the afternoon a new power had risen up. The evening before, the Hôtel de Ville had been invaded by a party of insurgents, of whom some unknown person, called Dubourg, had constituted himself the impromptu leader. The deputies, somewhat uneasy on this score, had conceived the idea of despatching Lafayette to the scene of action, and he had gone with the ostensible purpose of keeping order; but before very long Lafayette was posing as the head of a provisional Government, and giving his encouragement to the insurrection. It now began rapidly to gain ground. Having seized the Tuileries in the morning, it ransacked the Bishop's palace in the afternoon, and valiantly burnt to death two hundred soldiers of the Swiss Guard in their barracks. Nothing was lost, however, and it was evident that the Government, in agreement with the Chamber,

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would have the last word ; all the sooner, seeing that Paris alone was concerned in the revolt, and that France would not follow Paris. The fear of the Republic was great in all parts of the country, and up till now the overthrow of Charles X. meant the proclamation of the Republic.

It was strange, but nobody had yet said a word about the Duc d'Orleans ; in spite of the attempt to revive 1688, none but a few of the initiated had ever given him a thought. And now, on the morning of the 30th of July, his name was in everybody's mouth. Thiers had seen the agreement between the King and the Parliament, and was anxious to prevent it ; he resolved to stake all on the last throw. Accordingly, during the night, in concert with his friend Mignet, he had drawn up a fervent manifesto, which at daybreak was placarded on every wall. "It is impossible for Charles X.," so it ran, "to return to Paris ; he has caused the blood of the people to be shed. The Republic would expose us to terrible divisions ; it would embroil us with the whole of Europe. The Duc d'Orleans is a Prince devoted to the cause of the Revolution. The Duc d'Orleans has never fought against us ! The Duc

d'Orleans was at Jemmapes! The Duc d'Orleans will be a citizen-king! The Duc d'Orleans has worn the tricolour under fire! The Duc d'Orleans is the only man who can wear it now; we will have no other!" At the same time Thiers hastened to Neuilly, where he found nobody but Madame Adelaïde, the Prince's sister, whom he tried to win over to his cause. The Duke was staying in his country house at Raincy. Thiers sent breathless despatches to him, pressing him to come to Paris. And all the time the Duc de Mortemart was reading the Acts of the King to the Chamber of Peers, and M. de Sussy was doing the same in the Palais Bourbon, where the deputies were assembled at the news of the retractation of the Ordinances. A tumultuous mob surrounded the Palace, and at the Hôtel de Ville Lafayette was falling more and more deeply in love with the Republic. To confer on the Duc d'Orleans the Lieutenancy-General, that is to say, a sort of semi-regency, seemed to the members of Parliament to be a very happy solution, which left the future uncompromised, while it provided an answer for the problems of the present. The deputies contented themselves with this course, while they

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appointed five agents to confer with the Peers as to the message which Mortemart had to draw up, and as to the "guarantees" which would be stipulated in order to prevent any return of so deplorable a conflict.

The Duc d'Orleans arrived between the night of the 30th and the morning of the 31st, and betook himself to the Palais Royal. At four o'clock in the morning he gave audience to Mortemart, and asked him if the King would recognise the title of Lieutenant-General which the deputies had offered him. On his arrival he had addressed a letter to the King that ran thus: "If in the terrible disorder of the country a title should be forced upon me to which I did not aspire, I trust that your Majesty will rest assured that I will accept no power but a temporary one, and that in the interests of our House alone. I here formally pledge myself to this before your Majesty." This letter exonerates Louis Philippe from the accusation so often brought against him of having conspired against Charles X. The Duc d'Orleans was no conspirator. But when he found himself on the steps to the throne, naturally enough he could not resist the temptation of mount-

ing them. His sense of honour was not fine enough, his patriotism not sufficiently enlightened, to restrain him. Like a good old paterfamilias, he thought of the children. He had those great *bourgeois* virtues which in a prince so easily degenerate into vices.

His decision must have been made from the moment when, on the 30th of July, he suffered himself to be led to the Hôtel de Ville, where he received the compromising blandishments of Lafayette, who had made up his mind to support him. But that was not all. On the 1st of August Charles X., who had removed from St. Cloud to Rambouillet, there convoked the Chamber for the 3rd, and ratified the Duke's title of Lieutenant-General. This was tantamount to constituting a Regency, the more so as the next day the King abdicated; and, with a boundless self-abnegation, and magnificent patriotism, the Duc d'Angoulême followed his father's example. This noble Prince thus suffered the Duc d'Orleans to become Regent during the minority of Henri V., and paved the way for conciliation.

He was not understood. The deputies, who do not seem to have had any of the

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civic courage that characterised their successors in 1848, abandoned themselves to the fear of insurrection. They imagined that in raising the Lieutenant-General to the throne they were yielding to invincible necessity. "We were very willing to believe in that necessity," wrote Guizot later, in a moment of melancholy introspection.

That same necessity served the Duc d'Orleans as a pretext for silencing his conscientious scruples. When General Froissac-Latour and the Duc de Mortemart brought him the King's Acts to sign he refused to receive them. He appointed his own agents to persuade Charles X. to make for the frontier, and on the 3rd of August, with a view to compelling him to fly the country, he authorised the march of the population of Paris upon Rambouillet. A howling mob, that recalled the early days of the Revolution, set out, several thousand strong, under the command of General Pajol; and to this threat of civil war the King ceded, and slowly made his way to Cherbourg. The same day the Duc d'Orleans attended the opening of Parliament; barely 250 deputies were present. The Prince uttered some vague and ambiguous

words, and made no allusion whatever to the Duc de Bordeaux. At his invitation, the Chamber began to revise the Charter, and it had about as much right to do that as it had to create a King. In a sort of prologue, from the fact that "the King and all the members of the elder branch of the Royal family were at that moment no longer upon French territory," it was argued that the throne might be declared vacant. Now, as it happened, that moment was the 7th of August, and Charles X. was not to sail from Cherbourg for England until the 14th. But Thiers' watchword had made an impression. Everybody went about repeating, for their own encouragement, that they had to choose between the Duc d'Orleans and the Revolution. History has robbed this epigram of its point. Everybody knows now that there was so little danger of a Revolution that the Republicans, conscious of their own impotence, and reserving for a later season the realisation of their hopes, adhered unwillingly, and with a very bad grace, to the new Royalty.

Nobody in the Chamber seems to have been aware that, legitimacy apart, the sole source of power is the will of the nation. Two

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hundred and nineteen deputies constituted themselves arbiters of the situation. They hastily revised the Charter, abolished hereditary peerages, introduced a few trumpery modifications, and offered the Charter thus amended to the acceptance of the Duc d'Orleans, who was all eagerness to swear fidelity to it. On the 9th of August the Chamber proclaimed him King of the French people, under the title of Louis Philippe I. Thus ended the amazing feat of legerdemain, which, begun by the audacity of a little journalist, ensured the moral failure of the new King.

France saw this happen without understanding it in the least. The people, dumfounded at the news from Paris, took fright at the thought of a return to revolutionary violence. It was dinned into their ears in every possible tone of voice that the deputies had saved them. And they believed it. How could it be otherwise? They could hardly succeed—where so many eminent persons had failed—in measuring the full moral depth of the nation's fall.

CHAPTER IV

1846.—LOUIS PHILIPPE ALMOST A KING

A KING is the head of a nation, with a principle of stability behind him and a dynastic future before him. For sixteen years Louis Philippe worked hard to become a king. He spent the first five years of his reign in trying to keep his seat in the arm-chair in which he had been seated in 1830, the latter eleven in an endeavour to raise the arm-chair and make a throne of it. He did not succeed in accomplishing this remarkable feat till 1846, two years before his fall. In order to appreciate the labour and difficulty of his experiment we must go back to the days which followed the Revolution of 1830.

For long enough it has been the fashion in official speeches to shower praises on that “noble people” who took up arms to defend the law, and, crowned with victory, went

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quietly back to its work the next day. These fine phrases do not altogether correspond with the reality. Let alone the fact that by far the most part of the "noble spirits" who took up arms in July 1830 cared not a straw for legality, the last thing they thought of was to go back to work; on the contrary, they never stopped until they had made insurrection a permanent condition of things. It could not be otherwise; for in a nation which has passed, as ours did, through so terrible a revolution as that of 1793, the forces and instincts of revolt cannot have dissipated themselves at the end of forty years; besides, the Government of July found itself obliged to show a dangerous indulgence to those to whom it virtually owed its existence.

The first effect of the Revolution of 1830 was the abrupt appearance *en masse* of thousands of place-hunters. It is said that Lafayette, in the early days, filed no less than 70,000 requests for employment. As it was difficult to entertain them all, a vast number of malcontents were made in a very short time. On the other hand, the gravity of the crisis was doubled by the suddenness with which it had broken out, at the very moment,

too, when industry and commerce were most flourishing. A battalion of the unemployed formed the rear of that army of revolt, whose staff officers were the evicted place-hunters. Clubs were formed again as in '93 ; they were less sanguinary, but if possible more anti-social ; the most subversive theories animated their debates instead of mere personal animosities. In fact, it is noteworthy that the street disorders of 1830 had their counterpart in the moral disorder which was general. Inexcusable violence characterised the Press ; the drama and the lower class of literature reeked with an extraordinary mixture of indecency and Satanic blasphemy ; Saint-Simonism, and other systems, no less absurd, found disciples on every hand, and had a baleful influence on public opinion. On the 17th of October a serious riot broke out at Paris, followed by the sacking of St. Germain l'Auxerrois; bands chiefly composed of students and, unfortunately, of steady *bourgeois* pillaged the Church and abandoned themselves to particularly disgusting orgies. They afterwards destroyed the Bishop's palace, and their example was followed at Lille, Dijon, Arles, Nîmes, Perpignan, and Angoulême. In 1831

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and 1832 serious insurrections arose at Lyons and Grenoble. In April 1834 a regular civil war broke out at Paris, and threatened to spread to other towns. The Society *Les Droits de l'Homme*, founded, says Louis Blanc, in order that "revolt might have its place in the State, possessing its own Government, its own Administration, its own geographical divisions, and its own Army," carried out its programme admirably, and greatly increased the general disorder. Now-a-days it is very hard to realise what this permanent state of disorder must have been between 1830 and 1835. France seemed to be drifting towards another '93. In any case, she was suffering from a revolutionary relapse. This relapse might have been prolonged indefinitely if it had not been for Casimir-Périer, who gave fresh heart to the sane part of the nation—by far the larger number—and taught it the old lesson of resistance.

What chiefly strikes us is the flabbiness, the cowardice, and the vacillation of the authorities. For years a mere handful of insolent agitators were enough to strike terror into the official soul. The Army, completely thrown out of gear by the abrupt change in

its commanders and its flag, showed a tendency to revolt, and on more than one point officers were known to have come to terms with the insurgents. Administrative anarchy was at its height. No words can describe the attitude of the Prefect of the Seine, who declared, the day after the sacking of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, that this event was "a lesson to the Government." These functionaries always seem to have hesitated as to their precise duty; as if they had asked themselves whether the insurrection of to-day might not be the authorised form of government to-morrow.

Louis Philippe was an arbitrary monarch masquerading as a Liberal, a Conservative disguised as a Progressivist. But his diplomatic subtlety was great, also his good sense. He instantly comprehended that to interpose his person in the way of these little exhibitions of popular feeling would be to run a good chance of being very quickly knocked down. He preferred to leave the task of restoring order to other hands. He pathetically called Lafayette his "protector," and Lafitte his "best friend." He walked about the streets of Paris, stopping to shake hands conspicuously with workmen, and conversing affably with

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them. He hummed the *Marseillaise* on the balcony of his palace. He refrained from showing his face in church, and hardly dared to be present at Mass in his private chapel. When the crowd insisted on rubbing out the *fleur-de-lys* from his coat-of-arms on his private carriage he allowed them to do so. He flattered the *bourgeois*, whom he admitted to his audiences, by showing himself well posted up in the statistics of their commerce, and even in the Ministerial Council he made a point of calling Thiers "my dear Adolphe," to show what a thoroughly good fellow he was. Caricatures (which were frequently indecent) and low jests ridiculing his person had no effect on his persevering efforts. But when Lafayette's fleeting popularity had waned, and Lafitte's incapacity became obvious, he called to the Ministry Casimir-Périer, whom he knew to be the one man who was determined on vigorous resistance to revolt; in spite of the curious personal antipathy he felt for him, he kept him a whole year, and would, no doubt, have kept him longer, but that Casimir-Périer died shortly afterwards.

On the other hand, while in his home policy Louis Philippe did violence to his natural

instincts and effaced himself, in his foreign administration he adopted a wholly different attitude. In France he ran a risk of compromising himself if he offered any resistance to revolt; but he knew perfectly well that his only means of winning favour in Europe was to pose personally as the champion of peace.

The Revolution of July had the immediate effect of reorganising the coalition of Continental Europe against France, the more so as it had directly provoked a revolution in Belgium, followed by serious insurrections in Poland and the Italian Duchies. As if to point the inference that France was responsible for these events, the French Press ran amuck against the treaties of 1815, demanding a revision of them, drawing up appeals to the peoples against the kings, hurling insults right and left in the faces of foreign Governments—in short, doing everything that was most ridiculous, most extravagant, and most intolerably provoking. The infection spread like an eruptive fever. Many people, otherwise perfectly sane, were attacked by it, and spoke of restoring the Kingdom of Poland, and of driving the Austrians from Italy, as if it



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were the simplest undertaking in the world. The rumour of these idiocies echoed dangerously abroad. Louis Philippe, with great discernment, suddenly discovered that London was the place where he could best speak and act, and that he must speak and act there in the name of peace.

By a curious coincidence, it was Talleyrand (an old man by this time) who took upon himself this mission. It will be remembered that sixteen years before, Talleyrand, at Vienna, had restored the foreign prestige of the Restoration by adroitly splitting the coalition; and Talleyrand was about to play the same game again in London in favour of Louis Philippe. This time the feat was not so difficult. To separate England from the other Powers was easier now, for two reasons: first, because the Restoration had alienated English sympathies by its general policy and by its recent action with regard to Algiers—by this the Monarchy of July naturally profited; secondly, because, in the face of the agitations which had arisen in Belgium since 1828, the Prince de Polignac had, at the beginning of 1830, assembled a body of troops very near the frontier, and had roundly declared that if

Prussia helped Holland, France would instantly help herself to the Walloon provinces. We see at once what price France had to pay, if not for England's friendship, at any rate for her goodwill—the sacrifice of any notion of aggrandisement on the Belgian side.

That was what happened. While Talleyrand was negotiating with Lord Palmerston for the establishment of Belgium as an independent Monarchy, without any advantage for France, the Cabinet at Paris was giving instructions to its representatives in the rest of Europe to rely on the policy of "non-intervention"; and Louis Philippe, for his part, was assuring the Ambassadors that France would lend no aid either to Italy or Poland. It is true that not very long after Casimir-Périer, by a triple master-stroke of his genius, sent a fleet to Lisbon, an army to Belgium, and a regiment to Ancona. At Lisbon it was a question of obtaining certain reparations due to France which Portugal took a distinct pleasure in withholding. In Belgium Périer professed to defend the independence of the new State against the offensive reprisals of Holland. By occupying Ancona, which belonged to the Pope, he proposed to gain a pledge which

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would suffer him to arrest Austria if her Italian ambitions became too threatening. This last operation was carried out in a mysterious secrecy, without any previous consultation with Périer's colleagues, and even without their knowledge. If not an act of brigandage, it was a very good imitation of one. It would have taken less to set the Continent on fire if anybody but Périer had been responsible for it. But in a few months this man had acquired an amazing prestige in Europe; he was admired, not to say applauded; he inspired confidence. These entirely personal sentiments perished with him, giving again place to general bad feeling. "I have already found," wrote, in 1833, the Comte de Saint Aulaire, recently appointed French Ambassador in Vienna, "that we are detested—both our men and our principles."

As long as the Belgian affair lasted Louis Philippe had no notion of breaking his understanding with England. It was by virtue of an agreement which Talleyrand extorted from Palmerston, that the French Army besieged Anvers, took it from the Dutch, and restored it to the Belgians (1832-33). But when order was established on that side, the King turned

his views in another direction. On the death of Casimir-Périer the Duc de Broglie had become Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was strongly in favour of an alliance with England, the only one which to him seemed possible and advantageous ; not, perhaps, at the moment (for hitherto it had been only a question of an understanding), but in a future which he judged to be not very far distant. The King was not fond of the Duc de Broglie. In fact, he was not fond of any Minister whose policy did not agree with his own ; and his own at present was to keep on as good terms as possible with the Continental Powers, in the hope of making a brilliant match for his eldest son, the heir to the throne. In thinking of that Louis Philippe not only obeyed his paternal instincts, he felt that the future of the new Monarchy largely depended upon the question. Nevertheless it is matter of regret that his matrimonial views were a grievous hindrance to our diplomacy throughout his reign. Many sacrifices were made in order to establish, first the Duc d'Orleans, then the Duc de Montpensier ; the one case resulting in our failure in Austria, the other in the Spanish project, the puerile "château en

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Espagne," which cost us so much and gave us so little.

The Duc de Broglie, being defeated in the Chamber with regard to a treaty with the United States, which they had refused to ratify (it was a question of some indemnities due since the days of the Empire), sent in his resignation. Louis Philippe tried to dispense with an active President of the Council. One after the other he had at the head of his Cabinet Marshals Soult, Gérard and Mortier. He grew more and more absolute in his fussy interference. "A Ministry," said he, "is nothing but a change of horses. Sometimes I have good animals, sometimes very poor ones." To keep a Prime Minister for show and to govern himself was his idea. The experiment was not successful, and when he had tried it for a year he had to give it up and take back the Duc de Broglie. Louis Philippe had the very bad habit of confiding in the Ambassadors who happened to have gained audience to him, and he took no pains to hide his annoyance. "Broglie is a necessary evil. I must swallow him or else put up with Radicalism," he touchingly remarked to Count Apponyi, the Austrian Ambassador. It

was about this time that his clandestine relations with Prince Metternich began. They corresponded regularly ; the Chancellor showered on the monarch good advice, mingled with deft flatteries ; these Louis received gratefully, affecting to set great store by them. But if Austria continued to regard us merely with coldness and a certain contempt, Russia cherished a deadly hatred. The Emperor Nicholas detested the Monarchy of July, and he heaped every manner of insult on the King of France. The letters of credit presented by his Ambassador, Count Pahlen, had been drawn up so inaccurately that Louis Philippe concealed them from his Ministers. After the affair of Fieschi the Czar was content with sending a few brief words of congratulation to the King, while he addressed a letter in his own hand to the widow of Maréchal Mortier, who was killed in the explosion. But in order to wheedle Austria into bestowing the hand of an Archduchess on the Duc d'Orleans, Louis Philippe had to soften the rancour of Russia. So he patiently put up with these trifling inconveniences, and spent his time in secretly undermining, not to say repudiating, the policy of the Duc de Broglie, who spent his

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in preparing an agreement with England for the defence of the Ottoman Empire against the encroachments of Russia.

At the beginning of 1836 the King felt himself strong enough to pursue his wild career of personal Government. After the Fieschian episode Parliament passed what were known as the Laws of September, severe regulations which subjected the Press to a control more rigorous than any it had known under the Restoration ! Previously, in 1834, a portentous and tyrannical law had been passed, which practically destroyed the right of free association under the pretence of regulating it. Thanks to these blows levelled at the doctrines to which he owed his throne, Louis Philippe enjoyed a certain security. When the Broglie Ministry was overthrown, he called Thiers to the Cabinet. He had, very naturally, a weakness for Thiers, who had contributed more than anybody to seat him on his throne, and had defended him energetically on all occasions since.

Illiberal as they were, Thiers was one of the authors of the September Laws. Thiers had been seen at the time of the insurrections of 1834 parading on horseback about Paris in the

company of General Bugeaud, and helping to take down the barricades erected by the insurgents. The turbulent little man, not yet thirty-nine, fell greedily on the feast of power. He subordinated everything to the question of the Austrian marriage. When Russia, Austria, and Prussia put their heads together, and, quite contrary to the treaties of 1815, destroyed the little Republic of Cracow, he never uttered a protest, but joined these very Powers in threatening Switzerland, which inclined to Radicalism ; he also refused Lord Palmerston's offer to intervene with him in Spanish affairs. Unfortunately this beautiful display of zeal was useless. The young Duc d'Orleans had been at the pains of travelling to Vienna to solicit the hand of the Archduchess, but, in spite of the seduction of his personal charms, he returned without it, and he had to content himself with marrying the Princess Helena of Mecklenburg. The Princess Helena of Mecklenburg was a very excellent person ; but an alliance with her was not the supremely desirable thing for the future sovereign of France. Thiers, annoyed with the failure of his matrimonial speculations, at once changed his tactics. He was anxious to try another war with Spain,

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for the advantage, this time, of the Liberal party, represented by Isabella II., who was opposed by her cousin, Don Carlos, the candidate for the throne. Louis Philippe was much too prudent to lend himself to this adventure, and Thiers withdrew from it. His first Ministry had lasted seven months.

He was succeeded by Comte Molé (September 1836). At the opening of the new Ministry France seemed to be enjoying, as it were, the late and fleeting honeymoon of her union with the Government of July. At any rate, the marriage of the Duc d'Orleans furnished the occasion for one. In him the nation found a prince after its own heart ; many Frenchmen founded great hopes on him, hopes which, to tell the truth, seemed to have been somewhat extravagant. It may be questioned whether, as a king, he would have known how to yield to the rather sweeping necessities of the constitutional *régime*, and whether he would not have involved the country in a policy of adventure and of war. However that might have been, his popularity as a hereditary prince was justified by the manner in which he fulfilled the duties of his position. The Duchess won the hearts of all who came near

her. The wedding festivals at Fontainebleau, the entry into Paris, the inauguration of the great Musée de Versailles, which Louis Philippe, in a genial mood, had established in the palace of Louis XIV., just restored—these things led to a truce in the war of parties, led even to some semblance of union ; and there was a great demonstration of popular enthusiasm in the presence of the Royal pair, who symbolised for France a new future and a new hope.

But all this was soon followed by a change, the importance of which was not at once perceived, though it was very great. This change was the initiation of public opinion into the foreign policy of the Government. Nothing of the kind had ever occurred before. Under the Restoration the Government had invariably been left free to choose its bearings. The tendency to sympathise with the Greek cause was only the expression of a very natural feeling on behalf of an illustrious and persecuted people. After 1830 there had been cries of, “*Vive la Pologne !*” and the emancipation of Italy had been the desire of many. But it was chiefly the Press, and the representatives of the advanced party, that took this attitude. It was not adopted by the Moderates, men of

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weight and of good sense. But when the question of Egypt arose the movement of public opinion was general. It is hard to realise the astounding extent of the popular enthusiasm for Mehemet Ali. His son, Ibrahim Pasha, who had captured St. Jean d'Acre, which Napoleon had failed to take, was regarded as an incomparable strategist, while the stucco civilisation run up by the Khedive was taken for a structure no less solid than enduring. The West was not then accustomed to the histrionic ease with which an Eastern despot can imitate the outside of its institutions and its manners. The Treaty of Kutayeh (1833), authorised by Europe, gave Syria, which he coveted, into the hands of Mehemet Ali. But the peace between the Sultan and his vassal, restored at such a price, remained precarious. It came to an end in March 1839. The Ottoman Army crossed the Euphrates, and, although it was commanded by eminent Prussian officers, among them the future Marshal de Moltke, it suffered an overwhelming defeat at Nezib.

This, then, was the situation. Either allow Russia (who desired nothing better) to intervene by herself, and virtually take possession

of Constantinople, or put Europe in the place of Russia. This latter solution could alone ensure peace, and maintain a wise equilibrium in Europe. England pressed France to unite with her in provoking this substitution of the five great Powers for Russia alone. The French Government dared not so far defy public opinion in its ardent enthusiasm for Mehemet Ali, backed as he was by the still mighty shade of the First Consul. Palmerston was inclined to cede to Mehemet Ali not only a hereditary right to Egypt but also a large portion of Syria. But, on the 26th of January, 1840, France, sounding a war-like note of challenge, demanded the whole of Syria for her favourite. Then a strange thing happened. The Emperor Nicholas saw a chance of isolating and humiliating France if only he sacrificed his ambition with regard to Turkey. Hatred got the better of self-interest. He entered into a secret negotiation ; he renounced the advantages conferred on him by the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi (1833), by which the Sultan had agreed, in the event of war, to close the Dardanelles against the enemies of Russia. Thus he facilitated the formation of a quadruple alliance of England, Austria, Prussia,

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and Russia, for the settlement of the Egyptian question without France, and against her interests. This was the object of the famous Treaty of London (the 15th of July, 1840), which in France gave rise to an exasperation not very hard to understand, seeing the illusions she had cherished—illusions which Thiers (then for the second time Prime Minister) had most imprudently encouraged.

In all this business the bitter passions of the Emperor Nicholas were admirably served by the personal character of England's Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston. There never was an Englishman who did morally more harm to England; none, certainly, who was a more pernicious master for his diplomatic subordinates, or roused against them so much ill feeling, extravagant and unjust as it frequently was. In the House of Commons Sir Robert Peel could accuse his diplomatic powers of being employed only to open old wounds, to add more venom to resentment instead of deadening it. He could reproach him with having placed his representatives in every Court of Europe, not with the design of preventing dispute, or putting an end to it, but in order to keep up an irritating correspondence, or, in

the non-ostensible interests of England, to ferment dissension with the representatives of foreign Powers. These sweeping charges unfortunately do not fall short of the historical fact. It was by no means France that suffered most from the frequently brutal, and sometimes underhand, proceedings of Lord Palmerston. At the present day, when the men who were the representatives and colleagues of Palmerston in the most distant parts of Europe are dead, and their letters and memoirs published, there is hardly a page of these that does not furnish some proof of the justice of Sir Robert Peel's accusations. Even in England there have been many revelations of the kind. We are astonished by this man, who in other ways displayed such great qualities. Certainly he had in him the makings of a great statesman, if he had not been subject to what we can only describe as perpetual attacks of moral epilepsy.

Among those great qualities Lord Palmerston possessed a vision wonderfully apt and true. While in France everybody, from the King to the simplest *bourgeois*, were reckoning on Mehemet Ali's power of resistance, Palmerston had measured the real weakness of the Khedive ; the rapidity with which his factitious

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power crumbled away proved him right. Intoxicated by this success, Palmerston would have followed up his campaign and dethroned Mehemet Ali, but that at this moment Metternich interposed. Europe, in fact, had been playing with fire. She knew Louis Philippe to be in favour of peace at any price, and she had provoked the public opinion of the nation to the point of an explosion, trusting to the King to keep it within bounds. In so doing she added considerably to the insecurity of his throne. Courageously enough Louis Philippe was bent upon peace, so much so that Thiers, who, for his part, would have much preferred war, resigned, giving place to Guizot; but this period left behind it an evil memory, a memory which helps to explain the facility with which France, in later times, lent herself to the bellicose designs of Napoleon III. She felt that revenge was due for the humiliations she had undergone in 1840.

And even then the question arose whether the King's influence would suffice to maintain peace. It was at this point that Metternich, frightened at being associated with so dangerous a business, drew in the reins. Prussia,

who nearly always followed Austria's lead, followed her now, and Palmerston and Russia had to give in. At London, on the 13th of July, 1842, the two Acts were concluded by which the hereditary possession of Egypt was ceded to Mehemet Ali, and the neutrality of the Straits of Constantinople and the Dardanelles proclaimed.

Happily Lord Palmerston fell soon after this, and a Cabinet, with Sir Robert Peel as its President, and Lord Aberdeen as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, came into power. But for the goodwill of the Prime Minister, and the courteous and conciliatory character of Lord Aberdeen, who knows what might not have sprung from thorny episodes like the "Droit de Visite," or the Pritchard affair, which an unhappy fate was about to scatter in the path of the English and French Governments? Under Lord Palmerston such episodes would almost infallibly have led to war.

In France, too, the Government had several times changed hands, but under conditions which were little calculated to strengthen it. We left Comte Molé head of the Cabinet. He did not long enjoy the truce which followed the marriage of the Duc d'Orleans. A coalition

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was formed against him among the leaders of the various Parliamentary factions, notably between Thiers and Guizot. Twice did Louis Philippe dissolve the Chamber and appeal to the country, without obtaining from the electors the *blanc-seing* which he desired. The coalition's professions of anxiety for the public good were not to be taken very seriously. Odilon Barrot relates, in his *Mémoires*, how Guizot, his enemy, called on him one day and said, "You are surprised to see me ? I have come to join you in opposing this personal Government, which is dishonouring and ruining our country. It is high time to put an end to these Ministerial favourites." If these words are correctly reported (and unfortunately they agree but too well with Guizot's behaviour at this time) it must be admitted that Prince Metternich was right when, on the 9th of July, 1839, he wrote regarding the Parliamentary disturbances in Paris : "All this because M. Thiers and M. Guizot want to be Ministers at any price !" It is not astonishing to find Thiers playing such a rôle ; it is of a piece with his character and his past. But as for Guizot, with his integrity and his conscience, at first the thing

seems inexplicable. But studying the man at a little distance, as we are able to do to-day, we find in him a certain want of intelligence ; he had no divination either of men or of events ; his *Mémoires* are full of cries of *Meâ culpâ*, dictated to him retrospectively by his own honesty and rectitude ; all his work, written or spoken, is great only so far as we see in it the reflection of a beautiful soul, and not through the luminous transparency of the thought. With all his learning he created nothing, neither a doctrine, nor a system, nor a method, nor even a new measure. It is true that after his death he left behind him an impression of self-respecting uprightness which is always a wholesome example to men.

At this period, moreover, Guizot suffered from a defect which time and experience afterwards corrected ; in fact, it sprang more from his age and surroundings than from himself. It was pride. No one at the present day can comprehend, without an effort, the nature of that pride, which was almost universal in France under Louis Philippe ; that *bourgeois* vanity, compounded of materialism and Pharisaism, of satisfied ignorance and beatific self-admiration. Alluding to the twelve days'



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discussion, by which the "coalition" attempted to overturn the Molé Ministry, M. de Barante observed, "We live in a saturnalia of pride," and M. de Vielcastel notes in his diary this typical characteristic of the deputy, whose vanity was flattered by the thought that at the very moment when the leaders of the various factions were reuniting in some combination, it was in the power of their obscure adherents to ruin the scheme by separating from them.

It is not easy to see in what way M. Molé was dishonouring France, nor why the title of Ministerial favourite should belong to him any more than to M. Thiers, who had been made Minister because the King wished it, or to M. Guizot, who was about to remain eight years in office for the same reason. But the violence, the folly, the chicanery, the bad faith of the arguments brought against him, are only too evident. To these he replied with indefatigable vigour. The proceedings were repeated at the election which followed. Molé failed to obtain a majority and retired; he was well avenged by the dissensions which broke out among his adversaries the very day after their victory. Was the new Ministry to be formed by the "grande" or the "petite"

coalition," that is to say, with Thiers and Guizot, or without them? This grave problem was discussed as if the fate of the universe depended on it. The discussion went on from March till May 1839, when Maréchal Soult formed a colourless Ministry, which lasted a year. Then it was Thiers' turn again, and he ran through his ministry as before, in a few months (February to October 1840); finally, Guizot succeeded him, and remained in office till the Revolution of 1848.

Louis Philippe and Guizot apparently thought that Parliamentarism and foreign prestige having suffered, it was their duty to restore the stability of the Government at home, while abroad they accomplished some conspicuously glorious deed which should consolidate the Monarchy, once and for all. It remains to see how they set about it, and how they failed; how, nevertheless, the Monarchy found itself stronger than might have been supposed, and how it perished unexpectedly by an accident. Public opinion is not greatly impressed by a foreign policy which pursues peace by means of prudence; even the most enlightened public does not, as a rule, estimate it at its right value all at once. To-day, after



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the lapse of time, we realise that Guizot achieved a series of small successes abroad ; and that, taken altogether, they gave us a very advantageous position. To say nothing of the glory won in Algiers and in Morocco, by Maréchal Bugeaud and his splendid army, in Greece, in Italy, in Germany even, where hostility against France was still violent, in Switzerland, where the struggle between the Radicals and the Catholics had assumed a dangerous character, everywhere French influence was gaining ground. Relations with England were becoming highly satisfactory. Queen Victoria's two visits to Eu ; Louis Philippe's visit to Windsor ; the negotiation so skilfully conducted at London by the Duc de Broglie for the abolition of the "Droit de Visite," aided, it is true, by the extreme complaisance and courtesy of the Peel-Aberdeen Ministry, all these things were unmistakable signs of understanding and friendship. We can easily see how far the famous Spanish marriages helped to injure our position in the eyes of England ; but we cannot see in what way they favoured us with regard to other Powers. The importance of that affair, badly conceived and badly executed, was but

Ministry refused to satisfy her on the question of reform. It was there, we know, that the Opposition took its stand in the campaign which ended in the revolution of February. The problem was twofold : at first it was a question of lowering the electoral census to 100 francs—that is to say, of giving the franchise to every citizen paying taxes to the amount of 100 francs ; this would have raised the number of electors by only 200,000, a difference which would not have greatly affected the national equilibrium. Next, it was a question of excluding State functionaries from the Chamber, and this reform was highly popular ; it had been suggested under the Restoration, and it was proposed not less than seventeen times since 1830 ; but the evil had gone on growing worse, and the honest Guizot made use of it with a curious unconsciousness. Magistrates, members of the Administration, diplomats, the King's aides-de-camp, officials of the Palace, had all ended by being elected to the Chamber to the number of 200, receiving salaries from the State for functions which they did not fulfil. The result was that, with regard to the Government, they were incapable of independent action. This state of things

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involved a germ of corruption which rapidly developed. To gain the thirty or forty votes required to make up a majority, the Government allowed many concessions in the matter of public works and State contracts. This evil infected the Administration, and the scandals which arose betrayed it to public opinion. Guizot's personal integrity was a cloak for these abuses; and whatever influence he exercised over the Chamber was used in defending a triumphant policy of obstinate immobility. "According to you," said Lamartine at the tribune in 1842, "political genius consists in taking your stand on a position which chance or revolution has won for you, and remaining there immovable, inert, implacable to every reform. If this, indeed, were what is meant by the genius of a statesman, charged with the direction of a Government, there would be no need of statesmen—a post would be enough!"

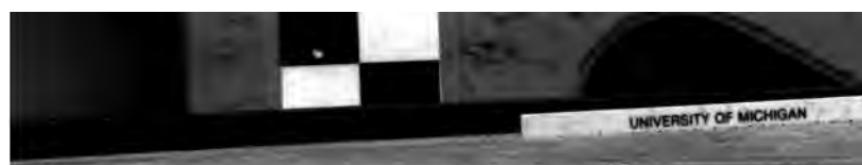
The King and Guizot agreed in carrying out this policy, but through different motives. The King, in spite of his great age and the grief caused by the death of the Duc d'Orleans (killed by a carriage accident in 1842), was satisfied. He felt himself a King. Much time

had passed since the guileless days of his walks through Paris, with his hand stretched out to every man, and his umbrella under his arm, and at the Palace nobody any longer cared to remember the revolutionary origin of the Monarchy. The theory of "royauté-populaire" had given way to that of "déméritimité." There was a tacit understanding that the throne, having become vacant in consequence of an "accident," that prince of the royal house who stood nearest to it by right of birth was called to ascend it for the defence of the "principle." This fiction had not been adopted by public opinion, but it was tolerated; after all, there was nothing between it and the reality but the existence of the Duc de Bordeaux, of whom France knew nothing. This explains Louis Philippe's exasperation when in London, at the time of the famous receptions in Belgrave Square, that young prince posed as the candidate to the throne. But this was a detail. France, and all Europe with her, agreed in treating Louis Philippe as a King. Russia alone went her own way with a provoking impertinence. Count Pahlen, the Russian Ambassador, who had become head of the diplomatic corps, left Paris as the 1st of

January drew near, in order to avoid addressing the customary congratulations to Louis Philippe. By way of revenge the French chargé d'affaires at St. Petersburg stayed at home on St. Nicholas Day, which was a much greater insult. But abroad the Queen of England's visits to Eu had had a good effect. So much so that Louis Philippe saw the barrier falling which hitherto had been raised between his dynasty and the principle of Monarchical heredity by divine right. In the Prince de Joinville, who was very popular in the navy ; the Duc d'Aumale, whose military reputation was growing fast on African soil ; the Duchesse d'Orleans, whose liberalism was vaunted everywhere, he found valuable supporters of his throne. The Comte de Paris and the Duc de Chartres received a democratic education in no way different from that of their fellow *lyc ens* ; the Royal prestige of the Comte de Paris was thus displayed under the happiest auspices. But for this very reason the King, immoderately sure and immoderately confident, settled himself in an attitude of absolute Conservatism, took his own need of rest for the need of the nation at large, and identified his personal aspirations with those

of his subjects. It was not for want of good advice. M. de Montalivet, M. Dupin, M. de Rambuteau, Maréchal Gerard, and Maréchal Sebastiani, all tried to give it him ; but he took it badly, that is to say, he did not take it at all ; his belief in himself having grown immeasurably greater with success. His own children watched his obstinacy with anxiety ; and the Prince de Joinville expressed his fears with perspicuous frankness in a letter written to his brother, the Duc de Nemours (November 1847), which has since been published.

As for Guizot, to every solicitation he replied very much in these words, which are at least the sincere expression of his thought : “ In Europe I have become the preserver of order ; it is an unlooked-for position for France, and from it she can draw the very greatest profit. I should be guilty if I sacrificed such an advantage to explain away a few internal difficulties.” The reasoning is defective, but the premise was sound. The French Prime Minister had indeed become a sort of preserver of order, on whom the eyes of all the Governments in Europe were turned. This was owing less to Guizot than to the prudence and the stability of the French nation ; above



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all, to the extraordinary excitement displayed in Switzerland (now in the hands of the Radicals), in Germany (where Frederick William IV. was summoning the princes, the towns, and the communes to a kind of States-General), and last in Italy, where, ever since the election of Pius IX. and his liberal experiments, popular enthusiasm had grown with every month. The world saw the amazing spectacle of an international popular demonstration picturesquely grouped round France as its centre ; France remaining calm all the time, and showing every sign of political stability. Now this stability was more than apparent. Historians, hitherto, seeing the Restoration collapse with such facility, have tried very hard to find in its construction the faults which doomed it to fall, and they have endeavoured, in the same way, to account for the revolution of 1848 by a thousand internal causes. They have given to the electoral reform demanded by the public a force greater than it possessed ; they have insisted on the disastrous influence exercised on all minds by such books as Lamartine's *Les Girondins*, or Michelet's and Louis Blanc's *Histories of the Revolution* ; they lay stress upon the fact that the Ministerial journals had

only 20,000 subscribers to the 150,000 enjoyed by the opposite organs, characterised, as these were, by unjustifiable violence and wicked calumny. No doubt these details are important. There is even another factor which did not arise under the Restoration, which yet went far to weaken the Monarchy of July. Over and above the "anti-dynastiques," Bonapartists or Republicans (these were not very numerous), there were now the Indifferentists; they were to be found in Right and Left alike. In the Right they were the Catholic party which had sprung from the eloquent appeals of men like Lacordaire and Montalembert; they did not desire change, but neither did they fear it; the form of government mattered little to them, provided that government showed itself favourable to their wishes, notably to that liberty of instruction promised in 1830, and never realised. In the Left they were the Socialists; all those who, without giving unqualified assent to the doctrines of Pierre-Leroux, or Buchez, or Cabet, or Proudhon, or Fourier, were nevertheless unsettled by these various utterances. They therefore neglected politics for a crude sociology; they desired, and indeed expected, some tremend-



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ous change in the social constitution of the universe.

All this obviously pointed to cracks ; but it was the façade alone that was broken ; the building had acquired a different kind of solidity than has long enough been attributed to it. The thing is easily explained. In the eyes of the peasant, the artisan, of the lowest class of *petit bourgeois*—and these people, mind you, made up the great majority of the nation—1830 was an accident which had been very soon mended. A change in the name of a sovereign, or the colour of a flag, could, as I have pointed out, shake their personal affection for the dynasty ; but it did not greatly trouble their existence. For them the Monarchical period was one and unbroken. As it happened, the time from 1814 to 1848 had been one of enormous progress and reform. Let us look a little nearer at this period of thirty-four years. In agriculture and manufacture (two things absolutely neglected by Napoleon) there had been constant progress. Cotton, linen, and silk spinning, weaving by machinery, the manufacture of coloured prints, and of silk and cotton fabrics was created or developed ; new industries, such as making of

ready-made garments, or of shoes with riveted soles, improved the condition of the less fortunate classes.

From 1820 to 1840 the iron and steel working industry was enormously extended; iron and tin plating was carried on; saws, scythes, needles, and machines were manufactured. From 1824 printing was improved; then came the manufacture of sugar from beetroot, of chemical products, of indiarubber. From 1812 to 1850 the net products of French agriculture rose from three to five thousand millions, and grazing, particularly of sheep and oxen, was extended. From 1814 to 1848 29,000 kilometres of good roads were made, 900 bridges were built, nearly 1,000 millions being spent on these works. The Empire had done hardly anything. The Restoration opened out 900, the Monarchy of July 2,000 kilometres of canals. It superintended the river-beds and river-sides, and spent 200 millions of francs in improving the sea-ports. Moreover, in twenty years (1827 to 1847), 1,621 millions of francs were gained in commerce, and the protectionist instincts of the nation were satisfied.¹ The

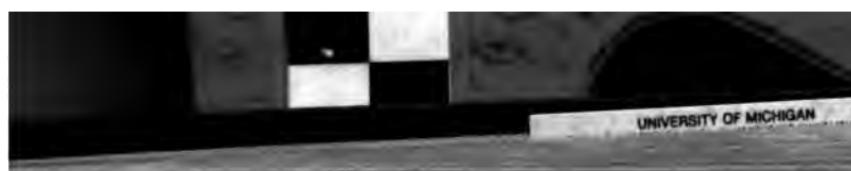
¹ The first Free-trade Society in Paris was not founded till 1846.

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state of finance was still more remarkable. Owing to the Empire and the Hundred Days the Restoration was encumbered with a debt of 3,000 millions ; it paid in full, and its credit continued to rise. The Five per Cents., which were at 52 francs in 1815, were at 80 in 1818, and 110·65 in 1829. In 1816 the rate of interest was at 9 per cent.; in 1844 the Monarchy of July borrowed at 3·50. During this period the Bank of France established fourteen branches in the Departments. In 1818 the first Insurance Companies and the first Savings Banks were founded ; in 1849 there were 345 Savings Banks. In 1816 the Paris Bourse quoted seven prices ; it quoted 42 in 1826, 258 in 1841. We could multiply these examples. The most significant fact is that the number of proprietors rose by a million between 1825 and 1850, and that the average price of land rose from 700 francs the hectare in 1815, or thereabouts, to 1,290 in 1848. During the thirty-five years of the Monarchy the population increased by 5,000,000 ; from 1827 to 1847 the rate of wages in the various industries increased by ten in every hundred. The value of this improvement is doubled by its continuity,

for a nation's prosperity lies in a long line of unbroken progress. There may have been a bad harvest in 1846, succeeded by a financial crisis,¹ but the impression of this continuous prosperity remains the same. Add to this the excellent judicial laws of 1830, 1838, and 1840, the laws for the regulation of juries, for improvement in the management of prisons ; the laws relating to lunacy, to expropriations, to bankruptcy, all these regulations of which it has been truly said that none were more "wisely made or more carefully prepared." Finally the founding of the great Schools (the Normale, the Forestière, the Écoles des Arts et Manufactures, d'Arts et Métiers, the Naval School, etc.) ; the organisation of Primary Education, made definitive in 1833 ; the wise administration of the eminent Prefects, who remained so long in office (at Vannes for eighteen years, at Nancy for sixteen ; at Paris M. de Chabrol and M. de Rambuteau, successively Prefects of the Seine, each for fifteen years).

¹ This crisis was in a great measure due to the unfortunate speculations in railways. At the end of 1841 Germany, Belgium, Austria, England, and the United States were ahead of France in the construction of railroads. An attempt was tried then to make up for lost time.



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The sum total of this progress was doubled for the more enlightened half of the population by the splendour of literature and art. These were the days of the great masterpieces of Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Alfred de Vigny, Berryer, Cousin, Lamennais, de Maistre, Bonald, Tocqueville, Augustin Thierry, Chateaubriand, Balzac, Ingres, Horace Vernet, Delacroix, David d'Angers, Meyerbeer, Rossini; and behind these masters there were many men of minor talents who in times less fortunate would have seemed worthy of the first rank.

It was these things that made the strength of the Constitutional Monarchy. Whence, then, came its sudden failure? From the same cause which once before had all but overturned it; 1848 was a reproduction of 1830. The obstinate determination of Charles X. to impose the Ordinances, and the no less obstinate determination of Louis Philippe to refuse reform, would not have been sufficient to bring about revolutions which the nation did not desire; but in 1848, as in 1830, the dynastic Left naïvely opened the door to the revolutionaries, and having opened it was not very well able to shut it again. I do not say that revolutionaries will always be with us; but they

are with us; and there were more of them in 1830 and 1848 because 1793 was nearer. A revolution like that of '93 produces many generations of revolutionaries. That they will die out is my firm conviction, because the germ of revolution, whatever may be said to the contrary, is exceedingly sterile; but they will not die out in twenty years, nor yet fifty.

These subversive elements were dormant when the "banquet" campaign provided them with an unexpected opportunity. The Left had organised a succession of banquets in the provincial towns with a view to creating an agitation in favour of the reform of the Chamber. Between July and December 1847 about seventy were given, the guests numbering something like a hundred and seventy thousand. The organisers were approached by various revolutionary bodies, whom they incited to wilder demonstrations. The campaign soon assumed a revolutionary character, and discussion was violent. But all this agitation was as yet on the surface. A final banquet was to be held at Paris on the 22nd of February. The announcement was attended with great uproar, and the Government having forbidden it, the organisers



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decided that it should not take place. But the *National* and other advanced journals had given a vague colour of insurrection to the announcement of the banquet, and on the morning of the 22nd bands from the faubourgs were assembled at the Place de la Concorde. They were quiet though facetious, and towards evening they raised one or two barricades by way of a joke.

On the 23rd the revolt took a turn, but it was still comparatively harmless. Unhappily, towards evening, by some lamentable blunder a fusillade burst out on the Boulevard des Capucines; the 14th of the Line had fired without orders and laid low many victims. The mob heaped their dead on a cart; and a melancholy procession, with lighted torches, went up the boulevards, scattering round its path an incredible panic. The *bourgeoisie*, the Government, the King himself were seized by it; 1848 was the revolution of fear; in twenty-four hours the disturbance was general. Orders and counter-orders were lost on their way; Paris was turned topsy-turvy without knowing wherefore or why. Finally, by an incomprehensible lapse, the King, after hastily abdicating in favour of the Comte de Paris,

took his departure, a departure that bore a remarkable resemblance to a flight. And when the Duchesse d'Orleans appeared at the Palais Bourbon, attired in deep mourning, and holding her son by the hand, the deputies received her with acclamations; but they had lost their heads like the rest, and when they received an order to form a provisional Government they promptly obeyed.

In such circumstances tragedy is invariably mixed with comedy. That order came from the office of the *National*, a paper that could not reckon on three thousand subscribers.

CHAPTER V

1848.—FOUR MONTHS A REPUBLIC

AUTHORS of historical manuals, whose chief desire is to print dates and periods indelibly on the memory, inform us that the French Republic, founded in 1848, lasted four years, on the grounds that the Empire was not officially re-established till 1852. But these things are formulas; the truth being that the Republic of 1848 lasted exactly four months, from February to June. It lived its life between the "days" of February and the "days" of June, that is to say, between the unlooked-for fall of the Monarchy and the fratricidal battle which gave back the power to the party of reaction.

There is nothing surprising in so brief an existence. If it does not take Republicans to make a Republic, they must be there to give it a soul; in '48 Republicans there were none,

or at the least but a mere sprinkling of them, led, to be sure, by Lamartine's imposing figure, but compromised from the very first by the party of revolution that helped them to power, and by the party of reaction whose support was necessary if they were to continue in it. For all their honesty, their *naïf* and utopian government was indubitably one of the most unstable that France has ever known. It was hardly born before its fall could be foreseen, and probably its days might have been numbered by weeks instead of months if anybody could have suggested anything better; but nobody could. Because the Monarchy had been overturned against the will of the nation, it by no means followed that it was easy to set it up again. It shared the discredit that attaches to all fallen powers, at any rate in France. If she already objected to Louis XVIII. for so meekly giving back his throne to Napoleon, she owed Louis Philippe a greater grudge for allowing his to be upset by a mere handful of Parisians, after a reign of eighteen years. Surprise was mingled with indignation and contempt, and the poor old King was reproached with not having had the grace to conduct his precipi-

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tate flight with becoming dignity ; everything was laid at his door ; he became a sort of scape-goat. Moreover, his eventual successor was yet a minor. Now if a man's throne is not easily set up again, a child's throne is a still more intractable piece of furniture. An entire sovereignty may be restored, but not a regency. As for the Duc de Bordeaux (now known as the Comte de Chambord, after the celebrated castle given to him at his birth by public subscription), he was the incarnation of a *régime* whose benefits were forgotten, whose memory the Monarchy of July had taken great care not to defend against calumny and ill-will.

Many Frenchmen were unaware of the fact that they were Monarchists at heart ; what is more, Lamartine's eloquence had convinced them that they were Republicans, and in all good faith they resolved to proclaim as "definitive" the form of Government established by chance. At first the name frightened them a little, but in the *régime* they found something very attractive. The name recalled the days of the Terror, and roused general consternation ; but the *régime* had provided itself with such impressive guarantees of peace

and fraternity (the abolition of capital punishment for political offences was the object of one of its first decrees) that this feeling soon disappeared. If it were possible to found a solid thing on fine phrases and laudable intentions, assuredly the Republic of 1848 should have lasted to this day; for nothing could be more eloquent than its phrases, or more pure than its intentions. It needed considerable rhetoric to carry off a certain absurd and incongruous element that went to the making of this provisional Government.

In fact, on the evening of the 24th of February, the Hôtel de Ville was the scene of a remarkable comedy. The insurgent invaders of the Palais Bourbon, after going through some farce of an election, had constituted Messrs. de Lamartine, Dupont de l'Eure, Ledru-Rollin, Cremieux, Garnier-Pagès, Marie and Arago, a provisional Government. No sooner was this provisional Government assembled at the Hôtel de Ville than it was joined by another provisional Government, composed of Messrs. Louis Blanc, Armand Marrast, Flocon, and an artisan called Albert. These had received their powers at the hands of some thirty revolutionists, who had met

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together in the afternoon at the offices of a journal, *La Réforme*. The serious thing was that this second Government had nominated Prefect of Police and Postmaster the citizens Caussidière and E. Arago respectively, who, to the great furtherance of disorder, were at once installed in these important places. Lamartine and his colleagues, on the other hand, divided among themselves the various Ministerial departments; while those of Finance, Education, and Agriculture were reinforced by three very eminent men, M. Goudchaux, M. Carnot, and M. Bethmont. Thus all Ministerial functions belonged to the first Government; the Prefecture of Police and Postmastership to the second. These two were fused together, as might be expected; but this fusion led to a curious system of grouping, beginning with Dupont de l'Eure and ending with Louis Blanc; in other words, a passage from the *bourgeoisie* to the Socialists by way of the Jacobin Ledru-Rollin and Albert the artisan.

The only weapon in the hands of this growing power was the eloquence of Lamartine, and it was certainly a weapon of extraordinary strength. Before it the red standard was

ruptcy naturally occurred to the Jacobins, who were inclined to sweeping solutions of all difficulties; what is more extraordinary, it found partisans among the moderate party and even in certain wealthy circles. Lamartine, like Baron Louis before him, foresaw that to save public credit was to save the country; and as it happened the experiment was decisive. Everybody realised that henceforth the debts of France were sacred even in time of revolution; it is impossible to prize too highly the service which in this case the great poet rendered to his country.

Unfortunately, between Lamartine, who devoted himself heart and soul to his work, and the nation which recognised his devotion and was prepared to place every confidence in him, there was an official staff which very soon employed itself in sowing discord among the departments. Prefects and sub-prefects had been hurriedly replaced by agents and sub-agents, whom Ledru-Rollin had chosen from among the revolutionary party. To be sure he would have had some difficulty in finding them anywhere else, for there existed yet no Republican party, properly so called. But it may be questioned whether there was any

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need for such violent hurry in replacing the functionaries of the Monarchy. And it would certainly have been more prudent to have provided some sort of a guarantee, instead of nominating at random enthusiasts and *déclassés*, whose extravagance it was easy to foresee. As a finishing touch, above the Agents were appointed Agents-General, and above them again Inspectors-General of the Republic. Sometimes it happened that more than one person would be nominated to the same post. Certain departments kept two agents perpetually struggling with each other; certain towns dismissed their agents and created committees, which, though harmless enough at first, soon threatened to become Committees of Public Safety on a small scale. The arbitrary behaviour of the agent for the department of the Rhone is a fair specimen of the way these functionaries had. This man happened to be a son of Arago, and may therefore serve as a good instance. At Lyons Arago expelled the religious orders, forbade the transference from the town of any sum above 500 francs, interfered between the officers of the Army and their soldiers, established an extra tax on "capitalists,"

diverted from its purpose a sum of 500,000 francs sent from Paris to the Comptoir d'Escompte, and so on. Agents so full of zeal and initiative were sure to find others more zealous than themselves to accuse them of lukewarmness. These were the demagogues of the Clubs. The Clubs of '93 were formed again at every time of political disturbance. They played a great part in 1830, and a still greater one in 1848. One club in Paris made itself more conspicuous than the rest, and sent out delegates into the departments with orders to keep an eye on all functionaries, and denounce them on occasion. It may seem incredible, but many of these revolutionary missions were financed by the Ministry of the Interior. Such was the feebleness of Ledru-Rollin. And, as it happened, these delegates had a more definite object than keeping their eye on administrations and denouncing them ; they carried out a programme which was the joint work not only of such professional agitators as Barbes and Blanqui, but of Louis Blanc and Caussidière, that remarkable Prefect of Police with whom Paris was afflicted. Their effort tended towards preventing the elections from taking place.



When the Republic was first proclaimed, universal suffrage was also established, and the electors were called upon to nominate a National Assembly. Now the little group of revolutionists who stood between Lamartine and the nation, and took up the *rôle* of the missing Republicans, had a wholesome fear of universal suffrage. There were many Frenchmen who, as I have said, innocently supposed that they had become Republicans, but the demagogues knew better. They felt that the mass of public opinion was not with them ; and they divined that the result of universal suffrage would be their wholesale condemnation ; they were an infinitely small minority, and they could only maintain themselves by disorder. Thus they had but one thought—to delay the elections at all costs, and to bring about a revolutionary despotism by war without and anarchy within. With this hope they encouraged insurrection in the departments by means of the club-delegates at Rheims, Rethel, Saint-Etienne, Valenciennes, Troyes, Toulouse, Castres, and Saint Dizier. Convents were pillaged, workshops burnt down, railways destroyed, and the fiscal agents pursued and ill-treated. And all

the time Paris was the scene of impressive demonstrations ; at one of these were assembled 100,000 men, who turned up at the Hôtel de Ville to enter their protests against elections ; many of them had but a vague idea of the object of the function in which they had been induced to take part. They only obtained an adjournment of fifteen days ; on the other hand, owing to the disorders in the provinces, the force of the reactionary current was beginning to be felt. As for war abroad, at first it seemed as though it would not take much to plunge the country into it, for all Europe was in a state of effervescence. Milan had repulsed the Austrians ; Venice was organising a provisional government ; Parma, Modena, and Piacenza had revolted. In Germany things were much the same ; the King of Bavaria forced to abdicate ; barricades raised in the streets of Berlin ; Metternich driven out of Vienna by the insurrection ; and, finally, risings in Poland. Such was the general situation ; but France, still stirred to emotion by the beautiful words of Lamartine, found her one delight in planting trees of Liberty all over the place, and in celebrating the Feasts of Concord and Fraternity. In vain

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did the demagogues organise an expedition to Belgium with a view to proclaiming a republic there ; the thing which Caussidière and Ledru-Rollin had the impudence to subsidise was nevertheless a regular swindle. This adventure failed miserably amidst universal derision. Poland, by reason of her misfortunes, appealed more deeply to the national sympathy, but again this was limited to acclamations and demonstrations of the most purely Platonic sort ; nobody dreamt of going so far as to take up arms for her.

As the day of the elections approached (they were fixed for Easter Day, the 23rd of April) the demagogues, filled with lively concern, redoubled their efforts. In the departments the greater number of agents and all the delegates exercised a general pressure in favour of the more advanced candidates. In Paris Louis Blanc, Caussidière, and Blanqui arranged a riot for the 16th of April, which proved a failure. The National Guard and the troops, under the impromptu command of General Changarnier, did their duty valiantly. At last the great day came. The National Assembly was to be composed of 900 members ; the immense majority belonging incontestably

to the reactionaries. The legitimist party counted no less than 130 seats, and three bishops and several ecclesiastics figured among those elected. Nearly all the men who had made their mark in the Chambers of the Monarchy of July were nominated. Not only did Lamartine achieve an unexampled personal success, but those of his colleagues who were known to be devoted to his ideas received numerous suffrages, while Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc could hardly collect the necessary number of votes. As for the workmen-candidates whom Louis Blanc had so magnificently patronised, they were nowhere.

This brief period (February to June 1848) is one of the most interesting in our contemporary history, for it is perhaps the only one which enables us to judge the French citizen in his complete independence, and see of what stuff he is made. In 1830, when he accepted Royalism in the person of Louis Philippe; in 1852, when he signified his approval of the restoration of the Empire, he was not a free agent, for he found himself confronted by the accomplished fact, and nothing was required of him but his formal sanction. In 1814 again, in 1815, and in 1870, when he helped



to bring new Governments to birth, it was in the face of the enemy ; he saw his fatherland invaded ; the pressure of circumstance was too great for him. But in 1848 all was changed ; there was no foreign danger on his frontiers, and within the way was clear. True the Republic already existed, but it existed only in name ; the French citizen was absolutely free to organise that republic after his own fashion, to steer the ship according to his good will and pleasure ; and from the very beginning his first duty was to restore order and safety, as it was his first care. He proved it by the singular eclecticism he displayed in his electoral preferences ; everything was done that could be done to make him waver in his resolution. The dangers of a return of the Monarchy were perpetually dinned into his ears ; attempts were made to corrupt his good faith by displaying before him the most seductive pictures of the delights of Communism ; when seduction failed intimidation was tried, but he knew what he wanted too well. What he wanted was to restore order, and for this work he sought out men whom he knew, whose past history or whose social position offered him sufficient guarantees. In the election of the

Assembly he showed his sound practical common-sense; his courage, as we shall see, he soon proved during the tragic events that followed.

A revolutionary minority when it has obtained partial possession of public power, and believes itself to be on the point of annexing the whole, does not suffer itself to be despoiled without attempting a vigorous resistance. The results of the elections were hardly known before riots broke out at different places (notably at Limoges and Rouen), and in Paris there were symptoms of probable insurrection near at hand. On the 15th of May, the Palais Bourbon was invaded by a turbulent mob which met with no resistance on its way, the orders for its suppression having been misunderstood. For three hours the deputies remained in their seats, refusing to yield to the insurgents; the tumult was alarming; there were disgraceful scenes, but neither insults nor threats could wrench from the deputies a single vote which would have compromised the dignity or the welfare of the country; finally the troops appeared, and drove out the intruders.

The Assembly, by the magnificent civic courage it had displayed on that day, won

immense prestige in the eyes of the nation ; at the same time it gained self-confidence. It could give freer play to its reactionary instincts, and it at once turned its attention to the famous "National Workshops." On the morning of the 24th of February, Lamartine had been weak enough to agree to proclaim the *droit au travail*, a formula which, though it may serve as an admirable subject for philosophic discussion, could only correspond with reality under a system of State socialism. To provide work for every one the State must have the power of disposing of all the means and instruments of labour. That was very far from being the case in 1848. It was all very well for Proudhon to declare "la propriété c'est le vol"; yet it was precisely with a view to defending property that the country had voted for reactionaries. Many of those who for the last twenty years had allowed themselves to be led away by beautiful socialistic theories were the first to turn tail when they saw a chance of property being actually threatened. In the face of these things there was a certain absurdity in proclaiming the right to labour. But in order to give this abstraction some semblance of practical meaning, national work-

shops had been opened in Paris, and workmen presented themselves *en masse*; they were very fine fellows for the most part, animated by good feeling and a healthy distrust of theorists, their chief desire being to earn an honest living. On the 15th of March, fifteen days after the opening of the workshops, they already numbered 14,000; on the 15th of April they were 66,000; at the beginning of May 100,000. What was to be done with such a multitude? They had been organised into battalions and companies, like an army; but there was no way of employing them except in absolutely trivial tasks. On the 1st of April the national workshops were already costing the State 70,000 francs a day; on the 15th the sum reached 120,000. As the number of the applicants went on increasing they could only obtain work one day in four; the other days they received half-pay, and had nothing to do for it. The evils resulting from such a system may be imagined, and history has a right to be severe on the utopians who lured so many honest workmen into this net and demoralised them. In fact, at the end of six weeks, thanks to perilous propinquity and enforced idleness, all these workmen became

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the victims of bad influences, their ideas were warped, their feelings embittered.

The Assembly decided first to send back with a small indemnity all those who, having come in the hope of entering the national workshops, were Parisians since less than three months ; to regulate the salaries of those who remained by the job and not by the day ; then to hasten, by means of premiums or advancements, the continuation of works begun before the fall of Louis Philippe by the departments and the communes, or even by private industry. These remedies were wise, but the discussion of them took time, and then, by some blunder, they were delayed in execution. The situation took a sudden turn for the worse, the spirit of insubordination advanced with rapid strides among the workmen, who now saw that they had been deceived. The commission (composed of MM. de Lamartine, Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Marie and Ledru-Rollin) which held power pending the election of the President of the Republic, decided on the 21st of June to dismiss from the national workshops all workmen from above eighteen to twenty years of age who would refuse to enlist in the army ; the rest were to be divided into brigades,

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several of which were to be sent at once into the provinces. There could not have been a more brutal, unjust, and blundering end to a foolish experiment. The natural consequence was not long in coming. The insurrection which the Government fondly imagined it had prevented broke out on the 23rd of June. It was terrible ; it lasted four days ; it was a civil war in the true sense of the term.

Very different were the days of 1830, and of February 1848, on which political prejudice has thrown a sort of retrospective lustre, by no means justified by the fact ; they were mere skirmishes, planned to satisfy the ambition or the cupidity of some, and favoured by chance and the apathy of the others. But the days of June were the natural, not to say the legitimate explosion of a people misled and duped by the most fallacious promises and illusions ; who, instead of finding their hopes realised, were plunged into deep misery by the stoppage of business and the lowering of credit. At the beginning of the insurrections, when Arago, who still contrived to preserve his illusions, was holding forth on a barricade to the assembled mob, one of them remarked as he loaded his rifle, " Monsieur Arago, you do not



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know what misery is. You have never felt hunger." This phrase explains, better than any argument, the passion of the insurgents ; they were fighting for bread, for their life. In the opposite camp they were fighting for the country's life and for its unity ; and the noble cause inspired many pathetic examples of heroism. Think of Leclerc, that soldier of the National Guard, who took part in the attack on a barricade ; he saw his eldest son drop dead at his side, took him in his arms, and with the help of a comrade, carried him to his home hard by ; then, handing to his youngest son the dead boy's rifle, he led him out to take his brother's place at the barricade. There is a simplicity in a deed like that, done by a peaceable bourgeois, which recalls the spirit of the heroic ages. Many similar cases could be cited. The *petite bourgeoisie* of Paris, that ranged itself unanimously on the side of order, fulfilled its duty in these grievous days with a virile resolution and a cool courage which go far to outweigh its many faults and frivolities.

The Assembly having called General Cavaignac, Minister of War, to the Supreme Power, held itself in permanence at the Palais Bourbon, so that in case of failure it might give him the

support and authority of the law. For the same reason it despatched deputies who accompanied the troops into the midst of the firing, where many found their deaths. Of all those victims the one whose end made the deepest impression was the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Affre. On the 29th of June, when the struggle, which had lasted for two days and a half, became more and more terrible, the prelate, clothed in his violet cassock, and bearing on his breast his pastoral cross, walked through Paris, making his way towards the Faubourg Saint Antoine, where the battle raged thickest. On the evening of the morrow the town for whose peace he had sacrificed himself saw him return, dying, laid on a stretcher borne by workmen and soldiers; at the passing of that melancholy procession, the crowd, stirred to its inmost heart, fell on their knees. The same hour the President of the Assembly, M. Senart, announced the end of the rebellion; while General Cavaignac addressed to the Army and the National Guard a vote of thanks, ending with these significant words: "As I am about to resume the rank of a simple citizen, I shall bring back with me into your midst one civic memory: that under these

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grave ordeals I took from liberty no more than what the safety of the Republic required of her."

In fact, one of the unforeseen results of this civil war was that it gave the Republic a head, and none better could have been desired. Cavaignac was, in the strongest sense of the word, a soldier, and at the same time he possessed, in the highest degree, those virtues which are typically republican; his soul, upright, proud, incorruptible, austere, contemptuous of forms and vanities, resembled in many ways the minds of the great Republicans of antiquity; his wisdom, his coolness, his determination and respect for law, had been evident to all eyes during this tragic episode. His African campaigns had well displayed the military side of his nature; his civic virtues were now apparent. The advent of such a man was the more providential, seeing that France had never yet brought forth a hero who thus answered the twofold necessity of the moment, being at once a soldier and a Republican. Nothing could have more clearly shown how little prepared for the Republic were the Frenchmen of that day. Frightened at the danger they had run, and grateful for the

deliverance so lately wrought, they would have acclaimed Cavaignac on condition that they might make him a dictator. But this he would not. "It is a *Coup d'Etat*," he said, "that they are asking of me : I shall never gratify them. I do not choose that ambitious persons shall one day make my example their authority." France did without him ; her choice was made.

The more I study the annals of this century the more I see that the revolution of June is what may be called a turning-point in the history of France. The insurrection of June meant, not only the overthrow of the Republican *régime* and that which prepared the way for it ; it meant the defeat of all the ends that the Liberal opposition had pursued under the Monarchy ; it was the exciting excuse and the signal of a reaction, which, like all violent movements, tended to overtake its object and lose itself in deplorable exaggeration. At the end of this tragedy the great mass of the French nation was ripe for a prompt restoration of the Monarchy—a modified Monarchy which would be neither that of the *ancien régime*, nor that which France had overturned but four months ago. It was clear that the

people would henceforth hold very cheap all parliamentary guarantees and public liberties ; would fail to see the use of the tribune and the Press ; institutions under whose shelter it had prospered for thirty-five years would be cried down ; for so far from perceiving that it had very nearly perished in trying to dispense with them, it held them responsible for all the evil. The elasticity of the Constitutional Monarchy was supposed to be the cause of its downfall, on the grounds that to be solid a *régime* must necessarily be strong ; so solidity came to be identified with strength. The prevailing feeling was one of insecurity ; so security became the chief good. If liberty must be renounced in order to obtain it, then, by all means, let us renounce it.

While these pernicious but extremely simple arguments were careering darkly through the popular mind, the Assembly was of another opinion. We saw that this Assembly was composed of a large number of Monarchists, who had helped to make up previous Chambers. Their acquaintance with public affairs, as well as their personal ability, gave them influence over such of their colleagues who professed less fixed opinions or were more

new to political life. For the rest the latter had an easy conscience. They had done their duty on the 15th of May and the 23rd of June ; and while frankly entering on the path of reaction they professed to remain on it as Moderates. Many, perhaps, may have had scruples in voting for the wholesale transportation to the colonies (without previous trial) of from 10,000 to 12,000 prisoners whom the insurrection had left on the hands of the Government. This measure was more or less explained by the necessity of the public good. But it was none the less illegal, not to say inhuman. At any rate, the majority of the Assembly had no desire to advance farther on the way of arbitrary power. It was occupied with reducing the finances of the country to order ; regulating the clubs without actually suppressing them ; restoring the censorship of the Press on the lines laid down by the Monarchy in 1815 and 1822 ; finally, in no very amiable spirit, it appointed a commission of inquiry to examine into the acts of the Provisional Government, and all that had been done generally since the 24th of February. As might be expected, the inquiry revealed a considerable state of moral

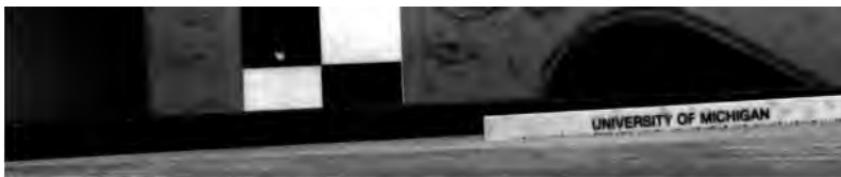


and material disorder in the administration, and it ended by throwing great discredit on the Republic. Nobody made allowance for circumstances ; it was reproached because of the good it had left undone, instead of being thanked for the evil it had prevented.

By a strange paradox, at the very moment when France and the Republic were making arrangements for a divorce, their contract of marriage was being prepared. Those who voted for a visionary constitution drawn up by theorists like the illustrious Tocqueville and Lamennais, do not seem to have paid very much attention to it. In spite of a solemn and somewhat ridiculous prologue, prophesying for it a happy eternity, there were few who saw in this legislative structure more than a makeshift. Odilon Barrot was very anxious that they should begin by creating communal and departmental institutions on Liberal lines. It would have been a good and wise measure, but that extending liberty downwards was considered dangerous, and avoided accordingly ; a Senate, moreover, were not wanted, owing to the general conviction that, in case of riot, a single Chamber would be stronger. The

questions of the right to labour, the right to State aid and progressive taxation, were of course laid aside; and, after a discussion, in which Lamartine proved the blind man and Jules Grévy (afterwards President of the Third Republic) the seer, it was decided to put the election of the head of the State to the vote of the nation rather than the Assembly. There was a very strong tendency throughout the country in favour of universal suffrage. The deputies did not see the danger of this tendency; they held it to be fleeting, and many believed that in yielding to it they were merely gratifying a harmless caprice on the part of the public.

The dictator-candidate was there, however. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had been elected once before in four departments, and had resigned in order to offer himself a second time in five other departments, which were obliged to replace such of their representatives as were dead or had resigned. This time he received the large number of 300,000 votes; and his position as a candidate for the Presidency was henceforth a recognised thing. But while the electors who voted for him had never seen him, and for the most part knew



nothing of his life up to that time, he was known to the deputies who had sat with him in the Chamber. On the whole they had the poorest opinion of him. They found him colourless, nervous, and awkward ; his maiden speech had caused them to smile ; he had seemed vague in his language, slow in his thought, vacillating in his actions. But under this deceptive exterior he concealed about him a very definite idea of the end he wished to attain. Under that phlegmatic manner his mind was continually at work ; his gentleness disguised an obstinacy the more remarkable seeing that he only brought it to bear on certain fixed points, certain notions, certain projects. Ambition of this precise type had never been seen before, and it is not surprising that those who knew him at that period should have failed in clairvoyance. Moreover, Louis Napoleon stood alone, the few friends who formed his escort were faithful and devoted, but their social position was obscure, and they had no influence. He had never been able to rally round him either Lamartine or Thiers, or Molé, or any politician who could have given him effectual help. Hence his

success with the electors was attributed to the power of his name ; and as his name was a symbol of order the Monarchists of the Chamber were not altogether displeased to see the suffrages tending in his favour. Besides, many of these fondly believed that Cavaignac would win a victory over his rival, and as at the same time his marked Republicanism gave them some uneasiness, they were glad to think that he would not obtain a too overwhelming majority, or a too formal sanction from the nation. As it happened, fifteen days before the date fixed for the election the Assembly had an opportunity of displaying its sympathy with the General. As the Left were criticising his conduct during the insurrection of June, Cavaignac mounted the tribune, and in noble and restrained language justified himself against the calumnies brought against him. He was received with acclamations, and 903 votes against 34 proved the confidence that the Chamber had in him. Now, fifteen days later, on the 10th of December, 1848, Louis Napoleon was elected to the Presidency of the French Republic by 5,434,216 voices out of 7,327,345, while Cavaignac only received

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1,448,107. As for Lamartine, whose popularity had been as fleeting as it was brilliant, he got less than 18,000.

France had given herself a master, and she did it with her eyes open and of her own free will.



CHAPTER VI

1856.—A BRIGHT SITUATION AND THE WAY OUT

LOUIS NAPOLEON reigned twenty-two years (1848—1870), four years as Prince-President, eighteen years as Emperor. These are the facts, against which the fiction of formulas is powerless. He had been hardly installed in the Elysée, had hardly formed his Ministry (composed of MM. Barrot, Drouyn de Lhuys, de Falloux, and others), when, taking advantage of the circumstance that certain dispatches were not communicated to him, he addressed to these gentlemen a letter, ending with this abrupt apostrophe : " In short, I perceive that the Ministers I have appointed want to treat me as if the famous constitution of Sieyès were still in force, and I am not going to stand it." The man who, within a fortnight of his election, could express himself in such terms, showed, *ipso facto*, that he would not only

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make use of his existing prerogatives, but that, if need were, he would know how to extend them.

His reign (I use the word advisedly) may be divided into two perfectly distinct periods. From 1848 to 1856 Louis Napoleon, utilising the forces accumulated by thirty-four years of Constitutional Monarchy, and further helped by circumstances eminently favourable to his career, rose to the most conspicuous and unexpected fortune. He spent the interval from 1856 to 1870 in exhausting these forces and squandering the advantages gained. Certainly this period of twenty-two years is one of the most remarkable in our contemporary history. Who would have dreamt at the close of 1848, just after that Republican experiment which began in smiling utopia and ended in bloody catastrophe, that we were about to enter on a sort of apotheosis, and that Imperial France was about to dominate Europe for the second time, no longer by fear and brutal power, but by the radiant seduction of peace? At the end of 1856, when the Universal Exhibition, the Congress of Paris, and the birth of the Prince Imperial, had displayed to the admiring universe this same Imperial France crowned



with the triple prestige of wealth, glory, and stability, who would have been bold enough to prophesy that another fourteen years would find her in the same situation as in 1814, with all her future to re-make, aided perhaps by a dearly bought experience, but heavily handicapped by the enormous start now given to other nations?

The Constitutional Monarchy bequeathed to Louis Napoleon the two mainsprings of power: an admirable army, and a considerable revenue saved, together with all appliances for industry and public works, resources which he had nothing to do but develop. The Army, strongly reorganised since the beginning of the Restoration by Marshal Gouvion de Saint-Cyr, victorious in Spain under the Duc d'Angoulême, and in Algiers under the Duc d'Aumale, was not, properly speaking, a national army. Twenty years of warfare on Algerian soil had removed its centre of action from France; it thus became a sort of caste, or huge family living an independent life, and a very noble and wholesome life it was. Perfectly disciplined, preserving its old religion of honour and the standard, it remained supremely indifferent to the fluctuations of the

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Civil Government, and felt a vague contempt for the *pékins* with their long speeches and fine schemes. All its sympathies would be naturally given to a Government that had a military basis. They were given to Louis Napoleon from his first appearance upon the scene. He was not a military man, and as yet he only wore the frock-coat of democracy ; but his forehead shone with the reflection of the Napoleonic glory whose memory was still preserved in the Army, even by its Royalist officers. Under the Restoration they had tabooed the name of the Emperor as head of the State ; not so the name of Bonaparte as head of the Army ; and every man who carried a sword was continually seeking the secret of victory under the shadow of his genius. Louis Philippe, when he gave back the Imperial standard to the Army, when he sent one of his sons to Saint Helena to find the hero's ashes and convey them solemnly to Paris, was encouraging a form of worship justifiable enough in any case. The absurd legend, which I have already referred to as tending to turn the first Napoleon into a Liberal misunderstood, gradually died out ; his nephew was about to give it the *coup de grâce*. But

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the military genius of the great man gained by being stripped of these adventitious trappings, and thus the Army became henceforth the quarter where the name of Napoleon was most certain of enthusiastic acclaim. As a matter of fact, the soldiers began the cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" on the first day when the Prince-President showed himself officially in Paris. He had not dared to wear a uniform, but already he was mounted on horseback and followed by a brilliant staff.

Henceforth every possible occasion—a review, a march, or a mere visit to some barracks—served more and more to foster the enthusiasm of the soldiers. The Prince on his side lost no opportunity of showing the Army how dear its interests were to him. He made acquaintance personally with the officers of all the garrisons in Paris; he invited them to dine with him; there was an air almost of coquetry in his evident anxiety to show himself well posted up in military matters. His journeys through the provinces, which he began in the spring of 1849, gave him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with other garrisons. A little later, when he had gathered the reins of power into his own hands, he



began to shower honours and dignities on the officers, attaching them every day more closely to his person. Those who belonged to Royalist families were not backward in their devotion to him, their political affections being subdued to the spirit of militarism ; so much so, that in a short time the army formed under the Monarchy was entirely won over to Louis Napoleon, and ready to serve him not only abroad for the sake of the national prestige, but at home for the furtherance of his personal advantage.

The economical resources which the Monarchy had accumulated and the empire proposed to spend for its own profit were no less strong. When a great country in a geographical position as advantageous as ours has enjoyed a long period of peace and labour, no merely passing crisis can do away with the results. The crisis of 1848, violent and dangerous as it was, had not destroyed the prosperity which had been slowly growing ever since 1814. Private finance is always affected by the way in which public finance is administered ; the latter, as we have seen, had been most ably conducted under the Restoration ; and the Monarchy of July had proved, if not its equal

in this respect, at any rate no unworthy successor. Consequently, Frenchmen in 1848 were extremely well-to-do, and it is a general rule that the more money people have the more they want to have. Then they are encouraged to speculate, or perhaps circumstances drive them to it, and the money they have amassed begins to roll faster—sometimes a little too fast.

Louis Napoleon was personally most disinterested. He gave with a generosity that was not always prudent, but luxury formed part of his political programme. It was not enough for him to dispose of the material resources of the country, he desired nothing less than complete moral dominion over the French people; for this end it was necessary to electrify them with his magnificence. Very soon, as soon as ever he could, he began to enlarge his expenditure, setting the example not only in entertainments but in sumptuous public works. When he became Emperor, the strange spectacle—unique perhaps in history—might have been seen of a country carrying on an heroic and apparently useless war in the far-off Crimea, while at home, in a capital renovated and sparkling with gaiety, it was

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inviting other nations to friendly rivalry in a Universal Exhibition. This was the use to which the Prince put the strong sword and the abundant wealth bequeathed to him by a Providence that seemed bent on overwhelming him with favours. These might not have been enough if political circumstances, external and internal, had not combined to establish his power; and if he did not possess the rare and difficult talent of creating new circumstances, at least he understood and could profit by those already existing.

The National Assembly having finished its chief task of drawing up and voting for the Constitution, elections took place on the 13th of May, 1849, with a view to the formation of a new Assembly. In these circumstances universal suffrage showed a growing tendency towards Conservatism. Lamartine and his old colleagues were not re-elected, scarcely seventy Republicans could be counted among the new Deputies; the Socialists, more fortunate, had nearly 180 seats; but the great mass of those elected (nearly 900) were either Monarchists, Legitimists, or Orleanists. Failing Bonapartist candidates it was to them that the country looked to support the head of the State in the

work of reaction. This lack of Bonapartists was due to the fact that Louis Napoleon, head of the State to-day, but yesterday unknown, had not had time to form an organised party. His isolation proved an additional force, for it made his inevitable conflict with the Assembly all the easier for him. He could not have constituted himself the enemy of Parliamentarism so easily, if in Parliament he had many declared partisans of his person and his policy ; of these he had few, but, on the other hand, public opinion was with him. The French people nominated an Assembly because the law required it, but they could very well have done without it. They had lost all interest in harangues from the Tribune ; it was towards the Prince that they turned their sympathetic and curious gaze.

At this point in his career Louis Napoleon positively seemed to hesitate sometimes, so slow was he in some of his evolutions. In reality he never hesitated for a moment, but *savoir attendre* was one of his dominant qualities. There is no doubt that he had the power to hasten by a year or even eighteen months his *Coup d'Etat* and the proclamation of the Empire ; but he strengthened his

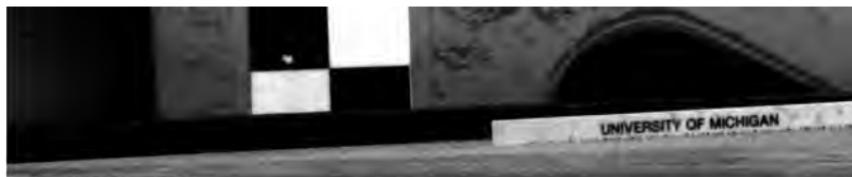
position twofold by letting it be understood that public opinion forced his hand.

For the rest of 1849, and the whole of 1850, he left the Assembly a free hand in the game of legislation. Thus, yielding to the influence of Montalembert, the great Roman Catholic orator, to whom Thiers of all people lent a helping hand for the occasion, it passed the famous law in favour of liberty of instruction, sanctioned the establishment of free schools and colleges—especially of those directed by religious bodies—and finally passed the law, known as the law of the 31st of May, 1850, which, by withholding the franchise from those who had not lived three years (instead of six months) in the same place, considerably reduced the number of electors,¹ and made universal suffrage more or less a figure of speech. These two laws were highly satisfactory to Louis Napoleon: the first because it tended to conciliate him with the clergy in general, and the Catholics, on whom he counted much, in particular; the second because he foresaw the possibility of increasing his popularity by some day re-

¹ From nine to six millions, that is to say, a diminution of one-third.

establishing on his own authority that same universal suffrage which Parliamentarism had just damaged. Some useful laws bearing on various questions were elaborated at the same time, but with the leisurely discretion characteristic of *régimes* favourable to free discussion. The journals which took their orders from the Elysée did not fail to draw attention to these defects in the proceedings of Parliament, and to point the obvious inference that progress would be quicker if it could be left to the simple decrees of the Head of the State.

From time to time he took care to remind the deputies that he felt his strength superior to theirs, and that he was not in the least afraid of them. It was very brusquely that (on the 31st of October, 1849) he dismissed his Ministers, in spite of the fact that they had a majority of two hundred votes in the Assembly. Later he took away the command of the Army at Paris from General Changarnier, who was wholly devoted to the Assembly; indeed, it was already counting on him in case of need. Curious to state, at the news of this vigorous master-stroke the Bourse rose all the time that the indignant



Assembly were voting by a great majority against the President. Louis Napoleon revenged himself by choosing new Ministers who did not belong to the Assembly, and he declared his intention to govern with this administration "until such time as the majority was reconstituted." The country was more and more impressed by the silence that he kept as to his most imminent actions, and the quiet force with which he carried them out. Not but what some anxiety began to be felt. That Socialist party which obtained 180 seats in the elections of May 1849 had in the June following made an attempt at a revolt (to be sure it was very quickly suppressed); it had subsequently fomented discord in Strasburg, Toulouse, and Lyons, and it was still powerful and made no secret of its hopes for 1852. According to the Constitution of 1848 the President elected for four years was not eligible for re-election. Now this time had gone by, and the President had made no sign. Did he mean to retire? He sometimes made a great profession of his desire to abide by the law. The country took fright. Ever since 1850 Councils-General (departmental assemblies that act locally)

poured out petitions for such a revision of the Constitution as should permit the President's re-election. In the following year petitions became still more urgent; those that were circulated soon received more than a million signatures. The Assembly had to act; and in acting it precipitated itself into the snare which the enemy had laid for it with such consummate skill. To effect any modification of the Constitution, it was required that two-thirds of the votes should be favourable. This number was not easy to obtain in an Assembly that, as a whole, was so divided. It was not obtained, and the country thus deceived in its hopes turned to the Prince, and in a manner compelled him to the *Coup d'Etat*.

Everything was ready; dubious functionaries had been gradually replaced; the more faithful regiments were grouped round Paris. The accomplices chosen by Louis Napoleon were all at their posts: General St. Arnaud at the Ministry of War; M. de Maupas at the Prefecture of Police; the third, M. de Morny, was at the appointed hour to take possession of the Ministry of the Interior. By a supreme stroke of cleverness Louis Napoleon had tried

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to induce the Assembly to repeal the law of the 31st of May, which had mutilated universal suffrage, and the proposal had been rejected. He had steered his ship so well that he had become in the eyes of the *bourgeoisie* the only effective defence against Socialism, and in the eyes of the masses the champion of universal suffrage. Finally, an affectation of calm led the nation to believe that nothing would be attempted before the end of the year; the very guests who were present at a reception in the Elysée on the evening of the 1st of December, 1851, left without a suspicion that the night that was falling would be a night great in history.

General Magnan commanded the army at Paris; his support was certain; the orders he received at one o'clock in the morning were instantly executed. At dawn all Paris was occupied; the belfries and printing-houses were guarded to prevent the sounding of tocsins and the publication of appeals to insurrection. Meanwhile the Prince's proclamation and decree, printed under the eyes of the soldiers by the workmen attached to the national printing-press, were posted on every wall. It was there declared that uni-

versal suffrage was re-established ; that the Assembly was dissolved ; and that the President appealed to the people to sanction his dictatorship. The provinces heard the astounding news almost as soon as Paris ; for at six o'clock in the morning M. de Morny was installed in the cabinet of the Minister of the Interior, and, while the unsuspecting occupant still slept, sent telegrams to all the departments. As for the Assembly, when it wanted to assemble and protest, it found its palace locked and guarded. An informal reunion, at which 250 deputies were present, was held the same afternoon in the Mairie of the Tenth District of Paris ; it was interrupted by the military. Moreover, a score of deputies, among whom were Thiers, Cavaignac, Changarnier, and others had been arrested during the night and conducted to the prison of Mazas.

History must judge the *Coup d'Etat* severely, because that act was absolutely illegal and by no means justified by the public good ; it will give Louis Napoleon the benefit of certain extenuating circumstances, recognise, for instance, that the majority of the people combined to urge him on the path

of illegality ; but it will show no mercy in its verdict on the abominable and useless repression that followed. At Paris, from the 3rd to the 4th of December, the troops were ordered to remain in their barracks in order to encourage insurrection, that they might have the glory of quashing it. The experiment was only half successful, owing to the people's disinclination to resistance ; among the 1,200 victims who perished were many honest workmen and harmless passers-by. Disturbances of a purely local character that broke out in the Nièvre, the Drôme, the Var, the Basses Alpes, were put down with a heavy hand, and their importance was exaggerated in order to intimidate the *bourgeois*, and increase their gratitude towards their saviour. As a finishing touch, the barbarous decree of the 8th of December authorised the transportation to Algeria or Cayenne of every individual known to belong to any secret society. In a few weeks 26,642 persons were either transported or brought before the *commissions mixtes*, a kind of impromptu tribunal, half military, half civil, which passed judgment without discussion or any form whatever. Eighty-eight members of the

Assembly were exiled on no other grounds than their opinions ; one of them, Baudin, was killed on a barricade.¹ These rigorous measures were quite useless, for the simple reason that if the majority of the nation had not been favourable to the dictatorship, it would have been overthrown in any case. With the combined help of the Monarchists and the Socialists it would have made short work of Louis Napoleon. Since his peculiar strength lay in his agreement with the majority, it was somewhat superfluous to shed blood and sow hatred broadcast, and thus lay up vengeance for the future.

On the 20th of December, 1851, 7,439,216 votes (against 640,737) sanctioned the deed which Louis Napoleon had just accomplished, and gave him power to decide at his own will and pleasure as to the institutions by which France was to be governed. This vote amounted to an abdication, pure and simple, on the part of the nation. Attempts have since been made to prove that it was not sincere ; but if there were one or two cowards among those who voted *for*, who will dare

¹ Under the Third Republic his body was buried in the Pantheon.



to deny that among those who voted *against* it were many honest men who, while satisfying their conscience, secretly rejoiced at the new-found security? France had twice suffered fear: the first time on the 24th of February, when she heard of the fall of the Monarchy; the second time, on the 23rd of June, when she saw Socialism at her door. At the present moment she was more pre-occupied with her brilliant economic record than with her liberties; and she could listen with pleasure to the new language addressed to her, only demanding as the price of her abdication an increase of material prosperity and a little of that foreign prestige of which she considered that the Monarchy had unjustly deprived her.

Louis Napoleon was hardly installed at the Tuileries—whither he had removed after hearing a solemn *Te Deum* in Notre-Dame—before he busied himself with carrying out his programme. He caused to be drawn up (by M. Rouher), and instantly promulgated, an amazing Constitution which was an organised despotism in disguise. A Council of State, a Senate, and a Legislative Body were elected and grouped round the head of the State as

their centre; their respective functions being to respond with a deep "Amen" to every expression of his will. The work was completed by a series of decrees. The Press was gagged; in every department the prefects became not so much the representatives as the spies and *gendarmes* of the Government. Their chief duty was to provide for the nomination at the legislative elections (these were to be held every six years) of whatever candidate the Government approved of. The University was placed in a position of absolute dependence; the *pensée tutelaire* of the new Power extended to the most insignificant details of public life. While all sorts of amiable advances were being made to the clergy, a brutal and iniquitous measure was passed for confiscating the property of the Princes of the House of Orleans. This had the effect of alarming their partisans, thus keeping them in an attitude of discreet respect. Many reforms and many projects, wisely prepared and long and carefully matured under former *régimes*, were realised with easy celerity by force of decrees. Railway companies, industrial companies, marine companies, loan and mortgage companies, all profited by the fact that politics

were now superseded and discredited. And all the time an unimaginable procession of public entertainments, banquets, fireworks, and balls rolled by and never ceased. It was the system of perpetual carnival which, two years later, the *Moniteur*, the official organ of the Empire, elucidated in this delightful aphorism, "A grand ball falls like a shower of gold on all our industries."

Louis Napoleon, like the *gourmet* that he was, took care that the dishes should be laid out one after the other on his table. Thus nearly a year passed between the *Coup d'Etat* and the official establishment of the Empire. As he had caused himself to be forced to the Dictatorship, Louis Napoleon arranged that he should be forced, coy and unwilling, to the throne. He undertook a long journey from one end of France to the other. Bourges, Lyons, Marseilles, Toulouse, and Bordeaux piled up their homage and adulation. On the 16th of October, 1852, he made a triumphal entry into Paris. He put it to the Senate that it might be as well to propose the re-establishment of the Empire. The Senate obediently adopted the suggestion, and a new plebiscite took place. The result was too

certain for him to be afraid of this procedure, which had the advantage of giving the Sovereign the right to dub himself "Emperor by the will of the Nation." This, in fact, was the title which Louis Napoleon assumed when 7,824,189 favourable votes (against 253,145) sanctioned the proposal of the Senate. On the 1st of December, 1852, at nightfall, the Senators, the Deputies, the Councillors of State, preceded by mounted torch-bearers, were rolling along in their carriages towards Saint-Cloud, just as the high dignitaries of the Consulate had rolled along, forty-eight years ago, on their way to proclaim Napoleon Emperor of the French. Unfortunately, people did not care to consider the resemblance ; it was in vain that, from his place of exile, the Comte de Chambord, then thirty-two years of age, wrote in his manifesto of protestation words which were a prophecy : "They have deceived themselves, and they deceive you. Not even the genius and the glory of Napoleon sufficed to found anything stable ; his memory and his name will still less suffice." Words like these were lost in the enthusiasm roused by Louis Napoleon's famous speech during his late visit to Bordeaux. The silence which had followed

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the dissolution of the Assembly gave singular impressiveness to this oration. Reading it to-day in cold blood, we can still admire the fine style, the generous aims of the speaker, but we are struck with the vague and utopian character of his thought. The "programme" of the future Empire implied excellent intentions on the part of its author, but it offered a very dubious guarantee for the time to come.

As a matter of fact the Emperor only continued what the President had begun. He uttered a great many large phrases about reconciliation, religion, well-being. He fitted out the officers of his household in new and splendid uniforms, without inquiring too closely into their antecedents ; he good-naturedly granted pardons to many condemned prisoners of State : this was conciliation. Bishops and priests received magnificent donations for the completion of their cathedrals and the rebuilding of their parish churches ; and all charitable undertakings were immensely furthered : so much for religion. As for well-being, it was understood that this followed as the natural result of embellishing the capital, inaugurating railways, and public *fêtes*. Every

day these became more and more brilliant and impressive ; till at the marriage of the Emperor with the Comtesse de Montijo (30th of January, 1853), they surpassed in magnificence every former spectacle of the kind.

This was the end to which Louis Napoleon, from 1848 to 1856, destined the soldiers and the wealth of the nation at home. We shall see what in the same period he contrived to accomplish abroad.

Here again Fortune dogged his footsteps. All the memories in France and Europe of the great epic of the First Empire were suddenly revived and illuminated by the appearance of Napoleon's nephew in the arena of politics. But two of these memories were apparently calculated to trammel, if not to obstruct altogether, the movements of the Pretender. The Catholics had not forgotten the miserable captivity of Pius VII., nor how he had been brutally seized and carried from Rome into France ; nor the odious pressure that the Emperor had tried to bring to bear on him ; nor the violence he had been exposed to. In this case Napoleon had been guilty of an unjustifiable attack on the Papacy ; we should have to go very far back in history to find

one which would compare with it. Europe, on the other hand, cherished less resentment for the defeats she had sustained than for the principle in whose name she had been compelled to suffer, the revolutionary principle which admits neither of right acquired nor of the law of international equilibrium ; which takes no thought for the *status quo*, but urges to ceaseless change and upheaval. Chance favoured Louis Napoleon so far that he had scarcely become President before an opportunity arose for a great act of religious conservatism, in re-adjusting the throne of Pius IX., lately overturned by the revolution. And he had scarcely become Emperor before he was called to an act of international conservatism in posing as the generous champion of public rights, and defender of the large interests of Europe against the ambitions and restless encroachments of Russia.

However peaceful the Republic of 1848 may have been, it could not detach itself from all interest in the great drama about to be enacted in its neighbourhood. In Europe at that time, torn as she was by convulsive movements on all sides, the Austro-Italian duel attracted all eyes. Owing to the vic-

torious insurrections at Milan (18th of May, 1848) and Venice, Charles Albert, the King of Piedmont, was driven to declare war against Austria; while popular feeling had compelled the King of Naples, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Pontifical Government itself to furnish contingents. These things seemed the beginnings of a great war. It was natural that Lamartine's sympathies should be with the Italians, and he let them know it. But strangely enough, his demonstrations drew out expressions of feeling unmistakably hostile to France. "*L'Italia fara da se*" was the proud reply of Charles Albert, who had no love for the Republic; and the phrase was adopted by his subjects, who repudiated the influence of foreigners, and nobly enough professed their desire to obtain their freedom by their own strength. This attitude very quickly turned the tide of French public feeling against them, and when at the end of the summer the Piedmontese had been defeated, and Italy seemed no longer unwilling to turn to Paris for help, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to his representative at Florence words which pretty well expressed the general opinion: "Italy ought to be very glad that the Republic

has agreed to forget the reception given to her generous overtures."

While the Austrians were re-establishing their power in the north of the peninsula, Rome fell a prey to anarchy; the revolutionists, driven from other strongholds, had found a refuge there; and concession after concession had been wrung from Pius IX.

The situation was aggravated by the murder of his Prime Minister, the honest and upright Rossi, the crime being perpetrated in full daylight and in the middle of a crowd whose indifference was suggestive of complicity. The Pope became in a manner the prisoner of the insurrection. On the 24th of November he succeeded in escaping *incognito*, and reached the frontier of the Neapolitan States; he found a refuge at Gaëta, where the Pontifical Court and the diplomatic corps were not long in joining him. In the person of the Pontiff the revolutionists lost a valuable hostage; despairing of ever seeing him again, on the 9th of February, 1849, they proclaimed the Republic of Rome and the abolition of the Pontifical Government. A little later the defeat at Novara completed the triumph of the Austrian arms in Piedmont, and Charles

Albert abdicated in favour of young Victor Emmanuel, the future King of Italy.

The cause of Italian independence was, if not lost, delayed, and there was nothing now to prevent Austria from hurrying to the succour of the Holy Father, thereby throwing France as a Catholic Power most indubitably into the shade. A Catholic Power France had proved herself more than ever to be; at no moment in the whole course of the nineteenth century had she been more disposed to claim her old title of Elder Daughter of the Church. The religious reaction which was preparing in the last years of the reign of Louis Philippe broke out in 1848. In 1830 the religious emblems had been insulted; in '48 the insurgents who invaded the Tuileries seized the crucifix in the Chapel Royal, but only to carry it reverently to the church of St. Roch. The name of God appeared again in public acts and official speeches; it was inscribed at the head of the Constitution; a solemn Mass, celebrated in the open air on the Place de la Concorde, accompanied the proclamation of the same. After the insurrection of June, the reaction, though less disinterested perhaps, became more ardent. The holders of property

whose dearest interests were threatened, sought in education and morality, touched with religion, a bulwark against anti-social theories. Louis Napoleon at once saw that he could do nothing without the Catholics, and he set himself to win them over. No means seemed to him so effectual as to forestall the Austrians in besieging Rome. The Assembly, with whom at that date he had still to reckon, had not indeed contemplated refusing the support of France to the Pope ; but its liberalism shrank from over-violent measures ; it would have desired a mere show of fight, followed by the peaceable entry of the Pope into his capital. Louis Napoleon, silencing the scruples proper to an ex-Carbonaro,¹ did not lend himself to this design. Rome was taken on the 2nd of July, 1849, after a long siege and some bloody combats ; the Republic of Rome was suppressed and Pius IX. re-instated. A portion of the French army stayed behind in Rome to protect him, and if necessary to ensure respect for his authority. The nephew's deed wiped out the

¹ In his early manhood Louis Napoleon had been affiliated to the Carbonari, and had even taken part in some of their revolutionary expeditions against the Papal States.

uncle's crime; the Imperial tricolour had solemnly restored the sacred power which it had once thrown down; henceforth the churches could pray with all their heart for Louis Napoleon, protector of the Holy See.

After the surrender of Rome there was a reign of peace; a peace which was more favourable to the Prince's designs than war. An expedition against the Arabs of Cabul, which chiefly served to bring into notice General Arnaud who commanded it (he had already attracted attention at the Elysée, and had been chosen as one of the co-operators in the coming *Coup d'Etat*), was the only war-like exploit of this tranquil period. No doubt it would have been prolonged but for the singular and sudden turn taken by Russian policy, which was then threatening the general calm.

The famous question of the Holy Land, which has been so long regarded as the prologue to the tragedy of the Crimean War, does not seem to have played the prominent part that historians have assigned to it. It is true that in 1850 this question was raised at Constantinople by the French Ambassador, when it was proposed to revise a treaty of

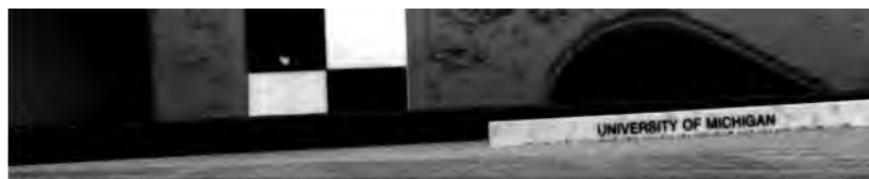


1740 regulating the privileges enjoyed at Jerusalem by the Catholics or Latins, clients of France. Since then the Greeks, or Orthodoxes, clients of Russia, had more than once twisted this treaty to suit their own views, and the Latins had protested in vain. The intervention of France led to a series of discussions at Constantinople, which soon became somewhat ridiculous. How many keys there were to the church at Bethlehem, and in whose charge they were to be left, was a matter of grave dispute. The harmless character of this sexton's squabble may be inferred from the fact that it lasted three years, when the Russian Emperor brusquely took the initiative in disclosing to the astonished eyes of Europe the remarkable designs that he entertained against Turkey. In spite of the incoherence of his character, this sovereign had given sufficient proof of his conservative spirit to make it more than credible that this project had not been long and slowly maturing. It was likely enough that Nicholas had felt himself eclipsed by the new imperial star which was rising in the West, and that he was actuated by jealousy. The French Empire had been inaugurated on



the 2nd of December, 1852. Now it was in January and February 1853 that Nicholas made proposals to Sir Hamilton Seymour, the English Ambassador at St. Petersburg, in view of the ultimate partition of Turkey to the exclusion of France. By this policy, rather than by the petty insolence he indulged in towards Napoleon III. on his accession to the imperial throne, he proved the nature of the sentiments that this accession roused in him. At London, not only were his proposals left unanswered, they were not even taken seriously. Then Nicholas, by a curious aberration of intellect, resolved to act alone. He concentrated his troops on the Turkish frontier, and by way of making a pretext for war, sent Prince Menschikoff to Constantinople with an ultimatum, which was naturally not accepted.

Menschikoff left Constantinople on the 22nd of May, 1853. All over Europe the news of this rupture provoked an explosion of indignation against Russia. An Anglo-French alliance was signed in two days; on the 27th of May it was announced to the Chamber of Communes. On the 11th of June, M. de Nesselrode published in the name of Nicholas



a circular that Metternich called "a monument of bumpiousness." M. Drouyn de Lhuys replied to it in two able circulars. The miraculous exchange of *rôles* was effected. The Emperor of Russia, now a terror to all Europe, was confronted with the Emperor of France, the champion of equilibrium and order.

The period from the landing of the French and English in the Crimea, on the 14th of September, 1854, till the opening of the Paris Congress on the 25th of February, 1856, commands attention by its very strangeness. The eyes of Europe were then turned to three towns: Paris, where everybody was amusing themselves; Vienna, where everybody was negotiating; Sebastopol, where everybody was fighting. It was believed at Paris that the brief expedition to the Baltic and the capture of Bomarsund (16th of August, 1854), then the splendid victory of Alma (19th of September), which followed close on the landing in the Crimea, would end the war. To tell the truth, when France plunged into the fray, it was thought to be a question of a tremendous demonstration, of gathering some easy laurels, and—that would be all!



Later, when Nicholas, the sole cause of the war, died (on the 2nd of March, 1855), a speedy peace was looked for. So nothing interrupted the preparations for the Universal Exhibition, whose splendour was heightened by the visit of the Queen and Prince Consort, following that of the Emperor and Empress to Windsor.

At Vienna, negotiations had been begun before the war, and they continued after it had broken out. It sounds like another paradox, but the difficulty of making peace came partly from the fact that there was no plausible motive for war. But diplomatists were not discouraged ; and M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, conducted his negotiations from a distance with a perseverance which did credit to his perspicuity, his design being to bring about a Franco-Austrian alliance, which he believed to be the only course calculated to serve the future interests of his country.

Meanwhile, in the Crimea everybody was fighting without in the least knowing why ; and the spectacle was truly admirable. In the whole range of classic literature there is only one poem which can be compared with

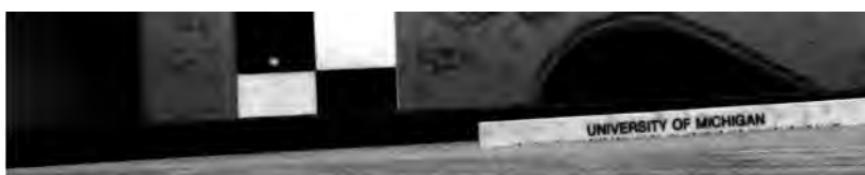


this epic of the Crimea, and that is the *Iliad*. The charge of the English at Balaclava ; the taking of the Malakoff tower by the French ; the splendid conduct of the Piedmontese at Traktir, a mere handful of men who could not understand the touch of genius which led Cavour to send them there ; to say nothing of the heroism of the army and the population of Sebastopol, commanded by the immortal Todleben : all this in its remote foreign setting, a background vague and vast as the old battle-fields of chivalry, makes a picture of indescribable grandeur and nobility. But the epic cost us dear : 95,000 French, 20,000 English, 2,000 Piedmontese, about 30,000 Turks, and 110,000 Russians, in all close upon 300,000 men perished in that far country—some in battle, others, more hapless still, in the hospitals where they were held prisoners by fever, cholera, and the cold of two fearful winters.

France had made the greatest effort, and she reaped the greatest advantage. On the 25th of February, 1856, the Paris Congress opened under the presidency of Count Walewski, then Minister of Foreign Affairs ; Lord Clarendon and Lord Cowley represented England ; M. de Buol and M. de Hubner,

Austria ; Count Orloff and M. de Brunnow, Russia ; the Comte de Cavour and M. de Villamarina, Piedmont ; Ali Pasha, Turkey. A treaty was there signed, of which it has been said that, when it was read, by no apparent sign could it be discovered which side had lost and which won. With the exception of an illusory stipulation as to the limitation of the Russian forces in the Black Sea, which England, fourteen years later, was glad to withdraw, all other points were such as could very well have been decided without war. Napoleon III. emerged from the bloody strife bearing on his brow that mild aureole that he so much desired when, in the maiden speech of the empire, he had declared "*L'Empire, c'est la Paix.*" Europe unanimously believed him ; she had seen him take up arms in the name of Conservatism, to-day she saw him putting up his disinterested sword into its sheath.

So far from demanding any share in the profits, he seemed to be chiefly occupied with his own affable behaviour towards his late enemy, trying to sweeten for him the bitterness of defeat, and to inaugurate an era of universal peace. While Congress was busily banqueting, 101 discharges of cannon announced to the



population of Paris the birth of the heir to the throne ; and the little Prince Imperial, displayed to the admiring crowd from the balcony of the Tuileries, was received with the same impartial enthusiasm which had greeted the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris. Wherever they occur such acclamations mean nothing, springing as they do from the emotion of the moment, and the present situation was a highly emotional one. Never before had France seemed so strong and so glorious. And yet two small facts had happened through which all this glory and all this strength were soon to depart.

Prussia had not been invited to share the labours of Congress. Public opinion in Europe was not favourable to Prussia, in England it was still less so. Prussia was reproached with her inability to take a side, with her frequent oscillations between Russia and the partisans of Ottoman integrity. Napoleon III. bore her no grudge for this attitude, which seemed to him justified by the conditions of Germanic order to which the Prussian Government was then pledged. He regretted the exclusion of this Government from the deliberations of the Congress, and he ingeniously tried to remedy

the oversight. He found a pretext in one of the questions as to the Dardanelles which had come before the Congress. These straits had been relegated in 1841 by a convention in which Prussia had taken part; accordingly she was now invited at this late hour to send on her plenipotentiary at once. She dispatched M. de Manteuffel. The Prussian delegate was received with some coldness by his colleagues, but almost embarrassed by the advances and attentions of the Emperor, who desired in these little ways to show his sympathy with Germany.

As for Piedmont, its share in the Crimean War gave it an equal right to deliberate with the Great Powers on all points submitted to the Congress. Its plenipotentiary, Cavour, with his genius for diplomacy, took a discreet advantage of his privileges. Only towards the close of the proceedings, deftly seizing the moment when it was least expected, he put the question of the claims of Italy. And he put it so well that it became, if not the subject of an official speech, at any rate the leading topic in the conversation of politicians, and the idea that "something must be done for Italy" so possessed the mind of

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Napoleon III. that very soon every idea gave way to it.

For years Germany and Italy had each followed the same grandiose and perfectly legitimate dream, the dream of national unity. Its realisation meant nothing less than the application of Napoleon III.'s pet principle; unfortunately, this application of a principle good in itself (especially if it be loyally applied) was directly contrary not only to the traditional policy of France, but to the interests of the reigning dynasty. It is conceivable that the Emperor may have had illusions as to the first of these points. A policy which consisted in splitting Germany and Italy into small pieces for the unique benefit of France does not seem particularly generous. Precisely because of its traditional character, some people considered that this policy was out of date, that it agreed no longer with the present conditions of the balance of power. But the odd thing is that the Emperor does not seem to have perceived that if Italy and Germany were to complete their unification they would be led to claim, the one Rome, the other Alsace; consequently, that the Pope would have to be sacrificed in order to satisfy Italy,



while to preserve the integrity of French territory it would be some day necessary to engage with Germany in a great war, a war of race against race. To obtain Rome for a capital and to plant the German standard in Strasbourg are not pretensions born of success and dating from yesterday; from the beginning of the century they had been the dream of German and Italian patriots, and they had not kept them secret.

Now these two eventualities—on the one hand, a great struggle in the very heart of Europe, and on the other, the sacrifice of the Pope's temporal power—were of all forces precisely those to which it was most dangerous to expose the artificial structure of 1851 and the frail dynasty of 1852. The great Napoleon's heir could only ensure his own future in following the inverse line to that pursued by his uncle. At the beginning he seems to have admirably understood this, then to have suddenly forgotten it. He deceived the French Catholics and the European partisans of peace; and when these supporters drew back from his throne, the lath-and-plaster foundation was left very plainly visible.

CHAPTER VII

1860.—THE OTHER SLOPE OF THE MOUNTAIN

If an explorer had left the civilised world, in 1857, for the deserts of Africa, and, losing all contact with his kind for a few years, had suddenly returned in the beginning of 1861, he would have found European politics much changed; and no change would have been stranger to him than the decrease in the position of the Emperor of France. No revolution had occurred in that country during the lapse of time, nor even the slightest disturbance, and the Empire ought to have been stronger, if only because it had lasted so long. The personal power of the Emperor was still apparently undiminished, for only the year before, under the influence of the great Cobden, he had—suddenly, and with characteristically scenic effect—imposed on the nation a radical change in the system of political



economy which it had pursued since the days of Colbert and Louis XIV. In spite of his boldness in substituting Free Trade doctrines for the traditional economics ; in spite of the grievances of the industrial leaders, who complained that their interests were attacked, and (with somewhat more justice) that they had not been consulted, nor so much as warned, the Anglo-French Commercial Conventions of the 12th of October and 16th of November, 1860, had continued, in the interests of Free Trade, the Treaty of the previous January. About the same time the Emperor had issued a very important Decree (24th of November, 1860), by which, on his own authority, he granted to the legislative body certain of the prerogatives of the lower House under Constitutional Monarchy, which they had desired without daring to demand : among other privileges the right of public discussion, the right to move an address in reply to the speech from the throne, and in so doing to discuss freely the policy of the sovereign. If the Treaty of Commerce argued considerable audacity, the Decree implied a noble confidence in the future of the dynasty, for it restored one of the essential principles of the

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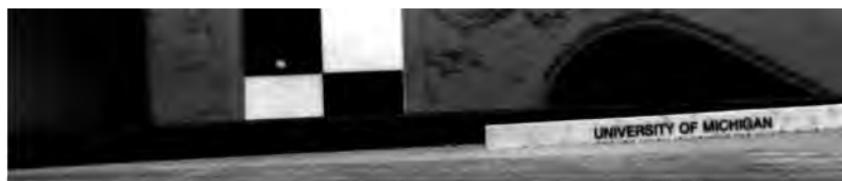
parliamentarism abolished by the *Coup d'Etat* in 1851. Events abroad by no means pointed to any weakening of the power of France. On the contrary, the laurels gathered at Magenta and Solferino were still fresh, and the brilliant victory of Palikao had just carried the prestige of the French name to the farthest confines of Asia.¹ The frontiers of the Empire had been extended by the ceding of Savoy and the Province of Nice. This notable enlargement of territory, justified by the geographical position of Nice, and the fact that Frenchmen and Savoyards spoke a common language, sanctioned, as it was, too, by the mainly-approving vote of the populations annexed, had the further advantage of abolishing one of the clauses in the Treaties of 1815, whose unpopularity had long been a burden to Royalist France.

In those circumstances Napoleon III. might have been expected to have grown by every

¹ It should be added that, owing to the ill-timed leniency of Baron Gros, the French Plenipotentiary, the fruits of this victory were almost lost to us; and it was through the energy of Lord Elgin that China was induced to treat with us, and the Anglo-French expedition was saved from a miserable diplomatic failure after all the military success won by the allied forces.

cubit that glory and stability can add to the moral stature of a sovereign. He had done nothing of the kind ; in the eyes of subjects and strangers alike his figure was diminished to such a degree as almost to deserve the insulting nickname that Victor Hugo bestowed on him in a celebrated pamphlet. If he had not yet become Napoleon the Little, he was in a fair way to achieve the title.

By this time the fate of the Franco-Italian enterprise was well known in France and abroad, with all the inconsequent proceedings that attended it. It was known how, as early as 1857, without the knowledge of his Ministers or diplomats—he was always trying to steal a march on them—Napoleon III. had summoned Cavour to meet him at Plombières, and in the greatest secrecy had, with his help, combined a mysterious conspiracy against the peace of Europe. It had been seen how, a few months later on, the day after Orsini's attempt at assassination (January 1858), the French Emperor abandoned himself to a perfect frenzy of repression, and laid on his subjects the yoke of that abominable "*loi de sûreté générale*," which was nothing but a law of suspicion, leading to the arbitrary



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arrest of two thousand citizens and the transportation, without trial, of three hundred. Then, all at once, this singular sovereign took a fancy to his would-be assassin. He made much of him; he found a home for his lucubrations in the hospitable columns of the *Moniteur*; in short, transformed him into a martyr of Italian independence. Then twelve months had passed in growing disquiet. Europe and France, moved by the same desire for peace, began to collect and annotate the vague words that fell from the mouth of the Imperial Sphinx. One phrase alone seemed clear, and that was an indiscreet one. On the 1st of January, 1859, when receiving the diplomatic corps at the Tuileries, he had explained himself to the Austrian ambassador in terms which implied an approaching rupture. But nothing was ready. If at that moment Austria had declared war against Piedmont, Victor Emmanuel would no doubt have been defeated before the French battalions could have come to his aid. What did the Emperor mean, then? On the day following this incident he had disguised its significance, and had tried to wipe out the traces of it. But the general uneasiness persisted, and England

pressed all her good-will into the service of peace. With indefatigable patience and perseverance Lord Cowley had hastened from Vienna to Paris, from Paris to Turin, only to be perpetually checked by the increasingly enigmatic utterances of Napoleon. The Emperor was like a man who has been hypnotised, whose will has yielded to the stronger will of the hypnotiser. In this instance the hypnotiser was Cavour. Nothing could turn the Emperor: neither the courageous opposition of Comte Waleski, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, nor yet the unpopularity of the war. M. Pinard, one of the highest functionaries in the land, observed, in a secret dispatch, that the partisans of that war were to be found only in those centres where people were plotting against the Empire. When, wearied out by the prolonged tension, Austria finally precipitated events by demanding from Piedmont a disarmament which it would have been perfectly easy for Napoleon, at that time, to insist on, war was simultaneously proclaimed at Paris and at Turin; and the Emperor set out, after having solemnly announced to his people that he was going to emancipate Italy "as far as the Adriatic."

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In spite of delays favourable to elaborate preparations, the result did not reflect much credit on either the Imperial commissariat or the Imperial Staff. The troops were fitted out and embarked in disorder; and lands made glorious by memories of the splendid campaigns of the First Napoleon became the field for a pitiable and almost infantile strategy. The victory was owing, not to the wise calculations of the generals, but to the valour and the spirit of the soldiers. Yet it was won, and Northern Italy could look forward to the realisation of the delightful prospect held out by Napoleon III.—“liberty as far as the Adriatic”—when a catastrophe befell suddenly, a bolt from the blue. Without any consultation with Victor Emmanuel, without any notice whatever of his intentions, Napoleon had made his peace with Francis Joseph of Austria, and, giving up his career of conquest, had made for Paris. Milan, actually liberated, received him with enthusiasm; but Turin watched his going with the silence of just reproach. For the promise was left unfulfilled; the Adriatic had not been reached; Venice and Venetia were to remain in the hands of Austria.

But something still more extraordinary was to follow. The treaty of Villafranca required the restoration of the Duke of Modena and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, whose subjects (with the help, as it happened, of secret agents from Piedmont) had taken advantage of the war to dethrone them and drive them from their dominions. Now, a month after Napoleon's return to France, Tuscany had petitioned to be annexed to Piedmont (20th of August, 1859), and Modena and Parma had followed suit. Then it was the turn of Romagna, which, up till then, had formed part of the Papal States. In time the provisional governments created in these four states were strengthened. They had placed the police, the administration, all the machinery of authority, in the hands of the friends of Piedmont, and among themselves they constituted a military league, with a Piedmontese General at its head. Then they proclaimed Victor Emmanuel King, and he was not prepared to refuse the title. In two months the union was formed, to Europe's amazement and Austria's intense disgust. France had not interfered. But, as if to emphasise the ineptitude of his behaviour, Napoleon III., in

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certain private interviews, which soon became public, had made a series of concessions, each more sweeping than the last, which did considerable damage to his own dignity and good fame. As these concessions had all come a little too late, the Italians gave him no thanks for them, and there remained nothing but the spectacle of open slight done to the most sacred principles of public law. And it was not only public law that suffered, but the private honour of the sovereign who had broken all his promises one after another. When he entered on the war he had promised Italy complete emancipation, and France the absolute integrity of the Papal States. As it was, Venice remained in the hands of Austria, and Romagna was taken from the Pope. So ended the year 1859.

1860 carried things still further. Napoleon III., remembering too late the stipulations made at Plombières, had suddenly claimed Nice and Savoy, a compensation that was natural enough; but it took all quality of disinterestedness from the Franco-Italian war, and went far to class it with the old Napoleonic enterprises which Europe had so much cause to dread. This payment for service rendered

had, at any rate, one advantage for Cavour : it left him free to follow his own audacious career. With Cavour's encouragement and secret help Garibaldi and his "Thousand" set out from Genoa on the 6th of May, 1860, to conquer the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. They made their triumphal entry into Palermo three weeks later, and into Naples on the 7th of September. Moreover, Victor Emmanuel, after sending an impertinent ultimatum to Pius IX., had invaded the Marches and Umbria. On the 18th of September his troops defeated the little Papal army, commanded by Lamoricière, at Castelfidardo, and ten days later took possession of Ancona. All this was done with the Emperor's complicity. *Fate presto* was his order to General Cialdini, who had been despatched to him on a secret mission ; and to hurry things up generally he himself set out for Algeria.

These were the events which in two years cost Napoleon the position he held among the Great Powers, and all the fruits of ten years' political wisdom. He was no longer the peaceable monarch whose words had proved so seductive. Whether it was a relapse into some constitutional infirmity, or giddiness born of

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his too sudden ascent to the height of power, he showed himself no less a weak, and therefore a dangerous man: a sort of crowned conspirator, with no definite policy, no respect for law and for his given word. "I cannot describe to you," wrote the Duc de Gramont, the French Ambassador at Rome, to M. Thouvenel, Minister of Foreign Affairs,¹ "how I suffer on the Emperor's account and my own from this atmosphere of repulsion and scorn which is beginning to spread round us." The enterprise was as revolutionary as you like (some of the means taken to accomplish it were iniquitous); yet it was not the work of Italian unity that could inspire feelings such as these. It was popular enough in England, and Europe accepted it as a painful necessity. The Kingdom of Naples and the Duchies had been known so long as detestable governments that their fall had been many times predicted. The incredible rapidity with which they crumbled away made the Great Powers somewhat disinclined to compromise themselves by restoring anything so rotten. Whilst admiring the noble stand made by

¹ M. Thouvenel had succeeded Count Walewski in 1860.

Francis II., imprisoned in Gaëta with his heroic wife, everybody thought it useless. Many things were already forgiven to Cavour ; his deeds were redeemed by the splendour of his genius and his patriotism. For these reasons Europe quarrelled with Napoleon III., not so much because he had taken part in such a work, as because of the means he had employed in taking part in it. In a word, it cost him the best part of her esteem and all her confidence.

If this was what happened abroad, the effect at home may be imagined. The forces which built up the Empire may be reduced to three. The strongest of these had been, as I have already said, the fear of Socialism. Its influence was enormous and widespread. Proprietors, large and small, had united in a common aim to save property. But just because the security so speedily restored had remained unshaken, this force was soon exhausted. There is no need for the police when the criminal has been chased out of the way. A nation's enthusiasm for the champions of order is only ardent so long as the promoters of disorder are still in existence. In France they seemed so far annihilated that their

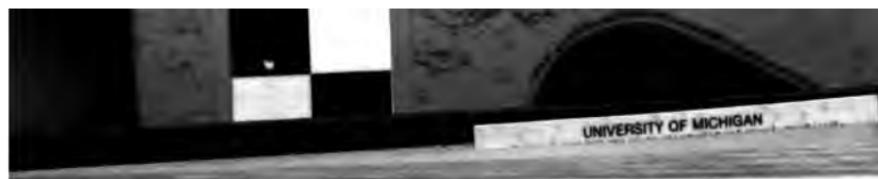
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authority in 1848 was forgotten, and all memory of the danger then run was rapidly dying out.

The unpopularity of the Parliamentary régime was a second source of strength to the Empire. That régime had this disadvantage, that the evil it did was instantly seen, while the good could only be appreciated after the lapse of time. And with a nation like the French, so impatient to see results, and ready to criticise them—a nation that has never known how to wait—this disadvantage would be strongly felt. It was inevitable that, after '48, Parliamentarism should be held responsible for the fall of the Monarchy. Under the Republic, the abuse of public speaking greatly increased its unpopularity. Then it was found that the man whom France had charged with the task of restoring order had his own system of government to oppose to the parliamentary system. He had a very clear idea of his system himself, and he set forth its advantages in the most attractive colours. It might be called the system of "enlightened Despotism," and as such, indeed, it was described by its warmest admirers. It was simplicity itself. No more deputies responsible



to their constituents ; no more ministers responsible to the deputies. These and all other responsibilities were rolled into one : the responsibility of the Head of the State to the people that elected him. Thus simplified, the machinery was to work better and faster ; the laws passed to be wiser ; State functionaries more active, and so on. Unfortunately, as twice applied to France—once in the beginning of the century by the great Bonaparte, again in the middle of it by his nephew—this system had twice resolved itself with startling rapidity into hereditary Cæsarism : that is to say, into a *régime* which gives the sovereign free and sole right to dispose of the forces and finances of the nation, and entails no sort of responsibility whatever. As it was less tyrannical than that of Napoleon I., the Cæsarism of Napoleon III. took more time to exhaust itself. But if at this period it could still count on a sufficient number of partisans, the nation at large could not fail to notice with anxiety certain alarming symptoms. The suppression of the press and the tribune had turned the national energy towards business. Stock-jobbing assumed deplorable proportions. In the middle class, and even among the



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people, it developed an exaggerated taste for luxury and pleasure, and everywhere aroused a desire for rapid and immediate gain. On the other hand, the number and extent of the public works undertaken in the large towns, especially in Paris, had the effect of making living dearer for the population which thronged the towns, while it raised the price of labour for the agricultural population in the country. Finally, finances were squandered. In ten years the budget rose from 1500 millions to 2000 millions : that is to say, by 500 millions. At the end of 1861 the floating debt nearly reached 1000 millions ; so that the annual deficit would be something like 100 millions. In the light of such facts we can understand that the theory of "enlightened Despotism" may have lost some of its prestige. That prestige would have been still more damaged if contemporaries had been able to realise how far the two Napoleons had lived on the preceding *régimes* : the first Napoleon using the patrimony of the fallen monarchy as a tool for his genius, the second exhausting the finances of the restored monarchy for the satisfaction of his ambition.

The third force, by far the most stable, but



at the same time the most compromising, was religion. It has been the misfortune of France, as well as her glory, that so many of the great men to whom she has given birth were too antagonistic in their genius. Their influence, strengthened and prolonged by historical conflicts, has left to their descendants a legacy of miserable opposition and inevitable strife. Saint Louis and Voltaire, Louis XIV. and Mirabeau—to give no other instances—were such representatives of principles or sentiments too opposed to each other, and too absolute in themselves, to be united fruitfully by the mass of the people, whatever the esoteric might be able to make of them. With us the result was, in religion as in politics, more or less abrupt and violent alternations between authority and liberty, ardent belief and scepticism. We have seen how, from his first appearance on the political stage, the future Napoleon III. (being then only President of the Republic) made it his object to gain the Catholic vote, and to turn to his own profit the religious reaction which about this time was already setting in. The expedition to Rome in 1849, and the passing of the law of free instruction in 1851, seemed signal guarantees of good

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faith; but the clergy, encouraged by the speeches which the Head of the State made on every possible occasion, were not long in asking for more, notably for a reform in the marriage laws, which would give the religious ceremony precedence of the civil contract. Such a reform was chiefly popular with the minor order of clergy, on whom Veuillot exercised an unhappy influence through his journal *L'Univers*, left free in consideration of his Bonapartist zeal. The bishops, for their part, desired that official public education should be kept more and more under their control. As for the Pope, his aim was the abrogation of the famous *Articles Organiques*, added to the Concordat of 1801 by the First Consul Bonaparte, and never accepted by Pius VI. The suppression of these articles was the condition demanded by Pius IX. in return for his concession in coming to Paris to consecrate Napoleon III. It had been the subject of a secret negotiation which lasted till 1854, so great was the importance which the Emperor attached to the ceremony of consecration.¹ While they waited for the realisation of their positions,

¹ Failing his object, in 1856 he asked the Pope to be godfather to the Prince Imperial instead.

the Catholics, above all the priests, accommodated themselves very well to the existing state of things. They were overwhelmed with homage, to which priests, as a class, are by no means indifferent. Religion was associated with all the public acts. Between ecclesiastical dignitaries and the temporal power there was a perpetual interchange of civilities and compliments. When they made speeches at him during his royal progresses, or spoke of him in their mandates, the bishops thought nothing of comparing Napoleon III. with Charlemagne ; while in its turn the Government addressed the bishops in language more obsequious than any used under the Restoration, a *régime* which has been sufficiently abused for its clericalism.

This state of things lasted till the time of the war in Italy. Then everything was abruptly changed. Napoleon's black designs were discovered ; his treason was denounced in the bitterest terms. Yesterday he had been Charlemagne ; to-day he was Julian the Apostate. The Government tried to defend itself before this sudden outbreak of hostility. Veuillot having changed his tune, the *Univers* was suppressed ; but the clergy had no need

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of the *Univers*. Strong in the position it had won, its speech was unfettered. And why not? Napoleon had made the *curé* omnipotent in every village, and the *curé* insisted on a hearing.

As for going back, it was not to be thought of. The Italian question involved the Roman question by the most logical and inevitable chain of reasoning. That question had to be put. Even if the Emperor allowed himself to take up arms against the Italian unity which he had helped to establish, he could not restore the past. Everybody felt that the events they had been engaged in were final. This explains the anger of the Catholics; it also explains the enthusiasm of the revolutionists. This enthusiasm had its limits; it did not make them rally round the Empire. If they applauded the new Imperial policy, it was simply because the revolutionary character of that policy seemed certain to lead to the overthrow of the Empire. Besides, the revolutionists were only a very small group without influence or means of action.

But there might have been compensation for the enormous loss sustained by the Empire in the withdrawal of Catholic sympathies. Other

sympathies might have been roused, new friends called upon to fill the void caused by the disaffection of the unfaithful. So thought M. de Morny. Connected with Napoleon III. by a blood tie, none the less close for being unrecognisable, he had given him not only sound advice but active assistance at the moment of the *Coup d'Etat*. His disapproval of the confiscation of the Orleans property had temporarily estranged him from the Government. He had since accepted the Presidency of the Corps Legislatif, and had stuck to his post. Nothing could be stranger than this Imperial legislative body, composed of deputies elected with the Government's consent.¹ Their daily tasks were in a manner arranged for them; they were even scolded like so many naughty school-boys if they raised their voices unduly, or wandered at all from the matter in hand. As it happened, the echo of their dis-

¹ At the elections of 1857 the Opposition only succeeded in electing five deputies in Paris and Lyons, so great was the pressure Government brought to bear on the constituents. The Opposition candidates could find neither printers to print their addresses, nor agents to distribute their voting-lists, nor journals to publish their manifestoes; and they were forbidden to hold even private meetings.

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cussions never reached the public ear, since it was forbidden to publish anything more than the driest and briefest report of each session. Many of them, having sat in Parliament before, had fits of independence. They planned all sorts of daring projects; then shrank back terrified by their own audacity, like a devotee before some temptation of the flesh.

M. de Morny had a wonderful talent for controlling them. With one terse phrase, witty or crushing as the case might be, he cut short any discussion that bid fair to be indiscreet, or even tedious. But he did not stop there. This man of the world, for all his elegance and super-refinement, was not a *dilettante*. His vision was accurate, not to say profound; he could foresee the symptoms of approaching evils and point out the remedy. It is probable that for some time already he had brought his influence to bear on Napoleon with a view to a return by discreet, slow, and very sure degrees in the direction of a constitutional monarchy. When the decree of the 24th of November, 1860, was published, M. de Morny met Emile Ollivier, who, although one of the opposition "five," was not disinclined to conciliation. "Well," said he,

"are you satisfied?" "Certainly," replied Ollivier; "but on the understanding that this is a beginning. If it is a beginning, you are established; if it is the end, you are done for."

What he said was profoundly true. If the decree of the 24th of November was to be looked on as the first step in the path of liberty, it opened a door of safety to the Empire. After having drawn his own profit from the military power and the national wealth (which had been gathered by the Monarchy), Napoleon was now able to utilise the capital of liberty accumulated by the same *régime*. Indeed, it was very evident that thirty-three years of constitutional government and parliamentary responsibility, years that were prosperous and happy, constituted a past which France would not easily forget. A nation that has once been free can never wholly bring itself to renounce its freedom. This is why a dictatorship in France can only be a temporary form of government, and powerless to found anything stable. There was one advantage in the situation. By a series of decrees issued at judicious intervals, the Emperor could restore the constitutional monarchy: restore it

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bit by bit, by successive grants made to his people. That was what Emile Ollivier meant when he said : "If it is a beginning, you are established."

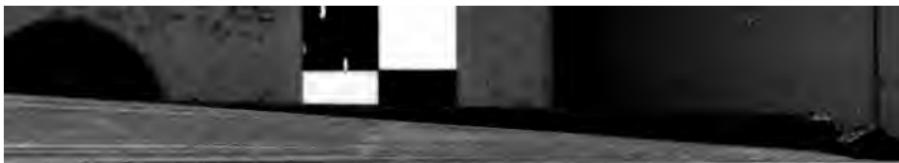
Unfortunately, it was not a beginning ; or, at any rate, the next step in the process was very long in coming. And when it came (on the 2nd of January, 1870) it came too late. The faults of the last ten years had been too many and too serious. France, by some conservative instinct, still supported her Emperor, but she had lost all confidence in his power. Between the Emperor and the nation certain ill-omened influences had in the meantime arisen. They had always been there ; and, while they encouraged his vague international dreams, they had paralysed his good intentions at home. It was the influence of the Empress and of the Court ; of the functionaries also, who, having modelled themselves on the arbitrary policy of the *Coup d'Etat*, were incapable, for the most part, of applying, not to say of understanding, any other.

No Court ever exercised a more detestable influence on the government and the morals of a nation than that of the Tuilleries under the Second Empire. This was partly due to the

careless good-nature of the Emperor. He had neither the firmness, nor, what was more, the perseverance to make his will felt in the details of his daily life ; neither had he the courage to make a selection among his courtiers, and to get rid of or discourage those who helped to lower the moral standard of his Court. It was no less owing to the origin and character of the Empress, who, not belonging by birth to any royal house, bore herself in her exalted station with a curious mixture of stiffness and abandonment. From the beginning to the end of their reign the sovereigns, so much better than their surroundings, showed themselves powerless to dominate them. Many of the familiars of the Emperor, who, for his part, never dreamed of enriching himself, entangled themselves in despicable commercial speculations ; while in the Court of the Empress, whose own life remained irreproachable, the moral corruption was terrible. These things took place amid a scene of sumptuous vulgarity more suitable to a casino than an Imperial palace. It may be imagined how far the atmosphere generated by such surroundings would prove unfavourable to projects that required time for ripening ; to slow evolutions

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demanding continuity of thought and tenacity of purpose. The Empress, being a Spaniard, had no sense of the necessity of public liberty. She made up for it by the narrow and fluctuating piety characteristic of her nation. It led her to desire a policy of clericalism, and made her hostile to that Italian unity of which Prince Jerome Napoleon, now son-in-law of Victor Emmanuel, was the declared champion. Unable to escape from the responsibility he had meanwhile incurred, it was in the Emperor's power to divide that responsibility henceforth by associating with the Government a *bond fide* parliamentary assembly freely elected. He preferred to seek distraction from his own cares, and from the anxiety of his subjects, in a ridiculous adventure abroad. He fondly hoped that in creating an empire in Mexico he would greatly impress the nations at large, and recover his prestige in the eyes of an admiring universe. There was the same incoherence in the long series of projects which, during the latter part of his reign, passed through his head, some of them managing to lodge there, giving rise to many experiments very unskilfully carried out. After having most imprudently favoured the alliance between



Prussia and Italy, he let Austria sweep down, then turned his arms against the conqueror of Sadowa when he was no longer in a position to stop him. His claims for territorial compensation were haughtily rejected. Germany already knew of what stuff the French army was composed : knew that its armament was superannuated, its arsenals exhausted, its staff reduced.

The Exhibition of 1867 flashed a sort of gilded optical illusion before the eyes of the nation ; but in vain. At the same time news came of the melancholy death of the Emperor Maximilian, and of the failure of the negotiations for the acquisition of Luxembourg. At this date, among the sovereigns who visited Paris, as among those who kept clear of it, Napoleon could not have found a single friend. The Italians guarded a bitter memory of what they called the treachery of Villafranca. They thought, on the whole, that a war which had lasted six weeks, and had only cost the lives of some ten thousand Frenchmen, was amply compensated for by the acquisition of Nice and Savoy, and they considered themselves quits with the Emperor. Therefore they resented his interference between them and the

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Pope, whose estates they had dismembered with the tacit consent of Napoleon, leaving him nothing but Rome and its environs. Austria owed France a grudge, not so much for the victory at Solferino, as for her neutrality at Sadowa, the more so as the habitual shilly-shallying of the Emperor had made them hope to the very last for an intervention which was to the obvious interest of France. Prussia and Russia had been alienated by clumsy manifestations in favour of Denmark and Poland. Common-sense ought to have prevented the French Emperor from espousing causes which he was unable to defend; but he persisted in believing himself to be the arbiter of the destinies of Europe, and had made no allowance for the steady enfeebling of his influence during the last ten years. Belgium distrusted him; for on several occasions he had cherished criminal designs against her independence. Finally, having offended the United States by his attitude during the War of Secession, he was forced, after five years' fruitless struggle, to evacuate Mexico, owing to the threats of the American Government, which, once the civil war was ended, was determined,

if necessary, to protect the Mexican Republic by force of arms.

The more complicated and involved his foreign policy became, the more repugnance did the Emperor show to the public discussion of it in Parliament. On the other hand, the Liberal opposition was assuming a character that it would have been dangerous to ignore. But just as the Emperor, in rendering aid to his allies, adopted half-measures, and thus absolved them from the obligation of gratitude : in the same way he posed as having suffered his subjects to tear from him concessions which, in reality, he was often willing to make. And there were many difficulties of another kind. An absolute sovereign, if otherwise no more of a tyrant than Napoleon III., might conceivably turn himself into a constitutional sovereign without much trouble ; not so those who surround and serve him. These men had been chosen just because they were firm rather than plastic, and their firmness tended to become stronger in the exercise of their functions. To establish a Liberal Empire would have been to change the greater number of State functionaries. Prematurely worn out, and already



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suffering from that illness which, even in 1868, already seemed a forerunner of his death, Napoleon III. lacked the courage for this sweeping measure. There had gathered round him a party of resistance composed of all those who, either through conviction or self-interest (these were the greater number), desired the continuance of the Constitution of 1852, and the withdrawal of such measures as had been already taken to steer the Empire towards Liberalism. This party was led by a man absolutely mediocre and limited in his views, whose influence on Napoleon was, nevertheless, so great, that there was a time when he was called the "Vice-Emperor." That man was Rouher. A clever orator, he held his own in the Legislative Corps against an opposition that had become more and more formidable. In spite of the efforts of the Government, the elections of 1863 had raised the number of the Opposition from five to thirty-five, of whom seventeen were Republicans, and nearly all able men, brilliantly capable of defending their ideas. Their speeches, published by right of the Decree of 1860, were eagerly read from one end of France to the other, and instantly awakened public spirit. The secret police of

the Empire everywhere noted this awakening in their official reports, which were made known after 1870. They leave no doubt as to the character of this renaissance of Liberalism. Thus in 1866, when Emile Ollivier had become the leader of a group of forty-five deputies who desired, like himself, to fortify the Empire with Liberal institutions, he considered he had a fair chance of advancing to power. But the movement was arrested, owing to the disastrous influence of Rouher. The elections of 1869 were eagerly waited for. They gave the Opposition a minority of ninety seats, a fair amount considering the small number of deputies. Now, of these ninety, forty were irreconcilably hostile to the Government. They belonged to the new Republican party, which had been completely reorganised during the year 1868, and had for its governing centre, not the stranded souls of 1848, but the young men of the universities, whose enthusiastic plaudits had already hailed Gambetta as the great orator of the future. As for liberty, that was the last thing they looked for from the Empire.

And, in fact, when liberty, or at least that which was to end in liberty, came, they could no longer believe in it. The country, solemnly

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consulted in a third *plebiscite*, gave in its adhesion. What else, indeed, could it have done? On the day of an election what nation would meekly consent to bring about a revolution that might end in nothing but ruin and trouble? The French nation acted wisely in refusing to sell its agreement to the thing demanded of it. In this it voted without conviction, and as a mere matter of conscience. It did not, however, foresee the coming catastrophe. The Empire had so ingeniously complicated the machinery of its foreign policy, that it had, so to speak, turned public opinion on a false scent; and on the very eve of the war a great number of Frenchmen persisted in disbelieving in the hostility of Prussia, and in its designs upon Alsace. Not only so, but the incredible progress made by Prussia, which was obvious enough (in fact, it could not well have been hidden), did not in the least strike them. For a people of clear and versatile intelligence, the French are amazingly slow at taking in new situations, or admitting hypotheses which they have not been used to. So they felt themselves quite secure, and could not imagine that Bismarck would be presumptuous enough to attack them. If he did,

they counted on such a resistance as must certainly end in victory.

But what they did foresee at home troubled them greatly. Indeed, even those who admitted that a war with Prussia might still be averted, were wondering whether the Empire would be of long duration. By a sort of inverted *Coup d'Etat*, if accomplished in time, say, between 1860 and 1865, the Emperor might yet have placed himself in a unique relation to his people; have created a constitutional monarchy incontestable in its origin, and continued to his own advantage the great Liberal work undertaken between 1814 and 1848, a work which the Republic was to take up after him. But the opportunity once let slip could never occur again. The prejudices and vacillations of the Imperial Government were a symptom of its weakness. Certainly it did not feel strong enough to let itself be discussed; it only consented to this under pressure from the country. After that, who could guarantee a liberty thus obtained? It might be taken back again to-morrow. At any moment, under any pretext, there might be a repetition, on a small scale, of the *Coup d'Etat* of 1851.

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In short, after 1867, it became evident to the more clear-sighted of the nation—and to others afterwards—that the final structure in which modern France was to have its habitation had not yet been built, and thus the future was to bring about new overthrowal. The work to which she had put her shoulder in 1814 was not done. After more than half-a-century of labour and effort, everything had to be begun again from the beginning. Temporary lodgings had been found, more or less spacious, more or less beautifully decorated. The home, which was to be for the generations to come what the old monarchy had been for the generations that had gone, was yet to be built.



CHAPTER VIII

REPUBLICAN RECONSTRUCTION

IT is not my design to state here the various events which have occurred in France under the Third Republic. This I have done in detail elsewhere.¹ But it would be as well briefly to review this period, and to show in what ways it resembles, and in what it differs from, the periods which we have just studied, and more especially to point out how the first seventy years of the century have influenced the last thirty. Thus I shall make clear the general character of that section of the French history which is the subject of the work referred to.

First of all, if we compare the two dates, 1814 and 1870, we see that the same situation has been reproduced in three very important ways. In both we have failure of the Imperial

¹ See *The Evolution of France under the Third Republic*, one vol., 1896.

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régime, foreign invasion, uncertainty as to the form of government of the future. Nevertheless, the analogy includes some very striking differences. In 1814, it was to nothing less than the coalition of all Europe that France was forced to cede: the very fact of the coalition being a flattering testimony to her strength. In 1870, she was conquered by a single one of her rivals, grown more powerful than herself: a defeat that diminished her prestige. Besides, in 1814, she could still hope that the form of government she might choose would bring her the ultimate stability for which she longed. In 1870, experience had made her sceptical in the matter of government. Of all the solutions she had tried in turn, none had proved lasting. The popular Monarchy was shattered by the Empire, and the legitimate Monarchy by the popular Monarchy. The French believed that they fell by their own weight. History had not yet enlightened us, made us see, in 1830, the manœuvring of the Opposition, and in 1848 the failure of power. Of the two alternatives that lay before us—Republic or Monarchy, Despotism or Liberty—we inclined both to Liberty and the Republic. Where three different Monarchies had succeeded each other in fifty years,

did it not sound to common-sense that the republican form of government must lead to less division ? And yet, of all abortive experiments, the overthrow of a republic of peace and labour seemed to have been the least convincing. The other *régimes* had time to develop and to grow ; the second Republic had been stifled in its very embryo. It was not known what destiny might have in store for it. Only this time we were to free ourselves from Utopias ; the time had gone by for dreams and systems. The Republican programme no longer included the somewhat *naïf* idealism of 1848 : to that we could return no more. We took up the *bourgeois* work of parliamentary monarchy. There were to be two Chambers again, and responsible ministers, and a Head of the State, reigning rather than governing. He was to be elected, but it was for seven years, and then he would be eligible for re-election ; so it was possible that his presidency might be as long as an average reign. These institutions were in all essentials those of which Louis XVIII. had laid down the lines in the famous Declaration of St. Ouen, their logical development in a Liberal and democratic form. They had given already once, and in spite of the shock

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of 1830, thirty-three years of peace and prosperity. They were going to guarantee another period equally unshaken by any great war or disturbance: to heal the wound of 1870 as they had healed the wound of 1814.

Such was the origin of the Third Republic, a work of wisdom if ever there was one. It took five years to found it. It did not directly follow the Empire. When, on the 4th of September, 1870, the Empire collapsed under the weight of an unprecedented disaster, which would have crushed the life out of any *régime*, a Republic was found to be more or less obligatory. It was accordingly proclaimed; but as the enemy was still on the spot, it could not yet be organised; the war had to be finished with first. The Government of *la Défense Nationale*, composed of deputies from Paris, carried on that war heroically. If they failed, at any rate they saved the honour of France. When peace was near at hand, the nation nominated a National Assembly, not unlike that of 1848. The majority of members were Conservatives, and in their heart of hearts, Monarchists. As soon as great interests are at stake the conservative instincts of the French people reveal



themselves. We are afraid of upheavals, innovation, and audacity; we put into practice the good old common-sense proverb, "*Un tiens vaut deux tu l'auras.*" Peace was hardly signed (at an enormous cost, and after many sacrifices) when it became necessary to besiege Paris, then in the hands of a contemptible insurrection, formulated by cosmopolitan adventurers. At last the time came to deal with home government, and give it a definite form. All this time the country had been reflecting, and its choice was made. It had gone through the train of reasoning indicated above. It wanted to take up the work of the Parliamentary Monarchy, and to take it up under the Republican form which it deemed the most stable. In this it agreed with the provisional head of the Government, M. Thiers. Whether Thiers had influenced the nation by inspiring it with his own ideas, or whether the nation had influenced Thiers, by persuading him of the nothingness of every attempt at restoration, their agreement succeeded in defeating the monarchical preferences of the Assembly. The future was to prove the soundness of their views, seeing that the Third Republic has procured for

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France the longest period of political stability which it has enjoyed in the whole course of the nineteenth century.

But the events of that century left behind them too many germs of discord and division for the new-found stability to be altogether untroubled. And this it has not been. The Third Republic has already gone through no less than four successive crises; and at the present moment it is on the eve of a fifth, arising in this case not from preceding *régimes*, but from the state of Europe. What is more, we can foresee others on the horizon. It may be as well to examine these crises in a short space. The first was occasioned by a supreme effort of the partisans of the monarchic principle. It broke out on the 18th of May, 1877, when Marshal MacMahon, then President of the Republic, being somewhat alarmed at the representations of his colleagues, brusquely dismissed Jules Simon's cabinet, pronounced the dissolution of the Chamber, and appealed to the country. He pointed out the danger of Republican doctrines, and invited it to a retrogressive movement. The country judged the danger to be imaginary, re-elected the same deputies, and supported



the line of policy hitherto followed. The 16th of May was a logical consequence of the past. The Monarchist party possessed an important minority in France, and it was not likely to consent meekly to be evicted. Moreover, it represented a very great and very glorious past, the true national past; and the experience of the beginning of the century justified it in again claiming for the Bourbons the Government of France. Besides, the royal family had recovered its unity. The Comte de Chambord, already old and childless, had an heir in his cousin, the Comte de Paris, grandson of Louis Philippe, who, for his part, had a large family. We can thoroughly understand the strong effort made by the Monarchists to hinder the establishment of the Republic, and to prepare, if not instantly to realise, the restoration of the throne.

The second crisis was graver and lasted longer. It was a religious crisis. It showed itself between 1880 and 1885. It is difficult to say whether it could have been averted or no. We have seen what was the course of religious evolution in modern France. Under the Restoration the clergy, in spite, or perhaps

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because, of the favour shown to them by the Court, were decidedly unpopular, and religion had little influence. This state of things reached its height just after 1830; then anti-religious tendencies grew gradually weaker, and in 1848 a very marked reaction set in. I cannot enter into the details of the causes which brought about this change. They were many and complex. But it may be stated as a general fact, that in France the too conspicuous protection of the powers that be is extremely injurious to religion, and that the more the clergy are patronised by the Government the more unpopular they are likely to be, while they are readily tolerated if they display an independent spirit, especially if they refrain from meddling with political strife. Louis Napoleon, being anxious to rebuild the Empire, had too great need of the Catholics not to seek to gain them. We have seen how he redoubled his attentions, and addressed them in language which no Head of the State in France, however fervent his piety, had ever allowed himself to use before. The clergy on their part were devoted to him, and supported him with very compromising enthusiasm. When by a sudden



turn of his policy the Emperor had made enemies of his former friends, the clergy whom he had encouraged to depart from their spiritual *rôle* were not inclined to return to it. Priests and bishops joined in making war against the monarch who had deceived them; their anathemas were as violent as their adulation had been high-flown. The effect on the country may be imagined. The fatal consequence of such violent extremes was that towards the end of the Empire the Republican party began to show a decidedly anti-clerical tendency. When the Republic was established the clergy declared itself hostile; it lent vigorous aid to the Monarchists on the 16th of May, and went so far as to stimulate their zeal and to incite them to active resistance. Still more than the clergy, certain religious orders showed signs of hostile feeling, especially the Jesuits, to whom the law of 1850, conferring liberty of instruction, had given a means of exerting considerable influence on the national education. Gambetta had already foreseen the situation. Jules Ferry was still more alarmed by it; and when he became Minister of Public Instruction, he tried to remedy it by restoring a law no longer in

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force, which might be interpreted as excluding the Jesuits from the right of opening colleges. It may be observed that the ordinances of 1828, signed by Charles X., were more rigorous than the famous "Decrees" of 1880. But these aroused in Catholic circles a no less frenzied opposition. The result was not happy; Gambetta and Jules Ferry seem to have much exaggerated the risk of Republican institutions involved in the educational system of the Jesuits: in any case religious peace was long troubled by the measure in question, without the attainment of the end in view. The colleges changed their nominal directorships, and thus the Jesuits eluded the decrees that touched them. On the other hand, the Catholics raised a cry of persecution, and thus retarded the final establishment of the Republic. Only after several years Leo XIII., with a wise and generous design, intervened, and induced them to leave off contesting the form of government. Nevertheless, a certain distrust still existed, and will long exist between the majority of the country and the clerical party, including the religious orders.

This distrust is the natural consequence of their clumsy interference with politics under

the Empire and during the first years of the Third Republic.

The result of universal suffrage in these crises was a very striking proof of the wisdom of the nation. So far from being belied by the event, that wisdom was more than justified. This is a very important fact, for the verdict of universal suffrage is the true barometer by which we measure the progress made by the public mind in France. If we look at Parliament alone, progress, though real, is not so perceptible, but it becomes evident enough if we study the electors instead of the elected. To the appeal drawn up by Marshal MacMahon, on the 16th of May, 1877, the nation made so clear a response that the Marshal, a man loyal in politics as in war, bowed to it; at the same time, the functionaries, for the most part Monarchists and less scrupulous than the Head of the State, had brought a very questionable pressure to bear on the electors. This only made their defeat the more impressive. France had made it clear that it was her will to maintain the Republic. The Chamber of Deputies being re-elected every four years, fresh elections took place in 1881, which followed

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up the success won by the Republicans in 1877. But in 1885 it was different. The Conservative party saw universal suffrage inclining again in its favour; it did not obtain a majority, but its minority was a larger one. This was owing to the appearance of the religious crisis in the interval; and without absolutely disapproving of the course taken by Jules Ferry, the country found his anti-clerical policy too energetic, and judged it somewhat dangerous. It wanted a Republic, but it wanted a Liberal one.

Soon afterwards came the crisis, which has been called by the name of the man who seemed to have been its cause, and was in reality its instrument—Boulangism. This was not in any sense a Monarchist crisis. The Monarchists, whose ranks were becoming more and more thinly sowed, only played the part of allies. It was a question of doing away with the Republic in order to restore it in the Cæsarian or Consular form it had between 1800 and 1804, and again in 1851. Here we again find ourselves confronted with one of the consequences of previous *régimes*. The Republic had lasted about eighteen years

—a fatal period. The Restoration had only lasted fifteen years. Louis Philippe fell at the end of eighteen years; Napoleon I. did not reign even as long as that; and when Napoleon III. reached that term he had already modified the character of his power by his Liberal concessions. The reasons are not far to seek. At the end of eighteen years a *régime* that has not obtained almost unanimous suffrages, that is to say, a *régime* which is still under discussion, must have created a certain number of malcontents. This is specially the case in France, where officialism has so many fascinations for the simple citizens, that to become a functionary is almost the universal dream. The evil is aggravated by a keen remembrance of past instability. No *régime* ever inspired less confidence than the Third Republic. By dint of hearing it repeated on all hands that the Republic was not destined to endure, many people had ended by believing this, and they were counting on its fall with the idea of finding employment under the next Government. It was from this discontent and disillusion that Boulangism was born. The flag was easily found—it was to be the Consulate. However

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barren, however risky the Consular system might be, there were two facts in France which made for it: the prestige of the First Napoleon who founded it, and the recollection of the prosperity of 1851, a prosperity due, as I have already pointed out, not to the excellence of the system, but to the amazing ability with which at that time Louis Napoleon reaped what the Monarchy had sown. However, this time, in order to raise the Consular flag, the nation did not look for a Bonaparte; monarchic ideas had suffered too severe a shock for that; it looked for a General with nothing dramatic about him, so much so, that it has been said that Boulanger's popularity was owing less to his personal qualities, which were feeble in the extreme, than to the fact that he rode a beautiful black charger and wore a beautiful white plume in his hat.

Boulangism, then, is incomprehensible to any one who has not studied the history of France during the last hundred years, and has not considered the impression left on it by that Consular spirit which I have shown to be a sort of prolongation of Jacobinism. Boulangism lasted several years; circumstances being favourable to it from the beginning. Under

M. Grévy's presidency the prestige of the Republican Government was diminished. The domestic scandal which caused the President to resign office nearly two years after his re-election (he had remained in power nine years altogether) furnished fresh material for the complaints of the malcontents. Colonial difficulties, financial stagnation, everything, in short, became a pretext for recrimination. There was no circumstance, not even the incompetency of Boulanger himself, which did not facilitate the formation of his party. Behind so colourless a chief all opinions would be grouped without any sacrifice of personal ideas. Such a party was, of course, utterly powerless to construct, but it was effectual to destroy, and there was a moment when it seemed likely to succeed. But the universal suffrage, which had seemed to become erratic, recovered itself in time. It was helped by Carnot, the new President of the Republic, whose moderation and great moral qualities were already exercising a wholesome influence. The Exhibition of 1889 was also beneficial in revealing a state of prosperity and resource, both material and intellectual, which had seemed incredible, and after all was owing to the Republic, which in 1870

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was the heir to the exhaustion, not to say the ruin of the nation. The elections of 1889 were consequently an absolute defeat for Boulangism.

The period which followed promised fair to be happy and untroubled. Most unexpectedly, at the end of three years, it was broken by a fourth crisis, very strange in itself, but notwithstanding as easy to explain as it was difficult to foresee. Parliamentary debates and press polemics, already under the Restoration, had the twofold character that I have described; on the one hand perpetual exaggeration in thought and speech, on the other I know not what ineradicable tendency to look everywhere for the shady side of things, to deal in plots and mysteries. It is true that something of the sort must happen in every free country, that these are inconveniences inseparable from liberty; but it is also true that in France they are more developed and more strongly marked than elsewhere. Race is in the first instance responsible for this. The French have a ready tongue and a lively imagination, they let themselves be easily carried away, and carried farther than other people. Political instability helps to exaggerate these defects. Even among

stable nations the parties which successively come to power have difficulty enough to avoid calumniating each other; but, at any rate, permanence in the form of government, regularity in the working of the wheels of the State, act as checks upon these tendencies. The vanquished party is obliged to respect these things, for the simple reason that he hopes his own turn will soon come. But when everything changes at the same instant, not only the Ministry, but the entire Government, rivalry is turned to warfare, rancour to deadly hatred, and calumny has unlimited opportunity.

Among the vanquished of 1877 and of 1889 there were certain exasperated people whose wild desire to avenge their losses soon overbore every sentiment of patriotism. They were looking for an instrument of vengeance. Now, there was much vague talk about bribery or corruption, as there always is in the absence of more impassioned themes. On the other hand, of all financial catastrophes which have happened now and again from various causes, there really was none which gave rise to such widespread ruin as the collapse of the Panama Company. The enormous sums expended, the

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evidence of frantic squandering, the ambiguous rôle played by several financiers, seemed to justify suspicion. Laws had been voted favourably to the Company, hence it was concluded that some deputies must have sold their votes. There was only one more step for adversaries of doubtful scrupulosity. Not only was that step taken, but the promoters of scandal carried their audacity and indiscretion so far as to bring a wholesale charge of venality against the Republican party. The accusation was at first anonymous ; then there was rumour of a list of a hundred and four names, found nobody knows how or where, and in part published. Journals won over to the cause spread the most outrageous falsehoods, the most audacious calumnies. The country went mad, and many people were taken in by the extraordinary revelations which were reported to them daily in a tone of absolute assurance, which was most unsettling. All this business had been beautifully planned, so as to influence the elections of 1893, or in the hope of giving the electors a distaste for the Republic. But the Machiavellism of its instigators was defeated. They had calculated that the supposed criminals would naturally try to

gain time by putting off inquiry; they had never dreamt that the innocent unjustly accused would, on the contrary, do all in their power to make inquiry more rapid and peremptory.

When the times for the elections arrived the affair was liquidated, and it was beginning to be understood why and by whom it had been set on foot. The result was unexpected. As regards the majority of politicians accused the charge could not be supported for a moment; the rest had been acquitted, one person only being found guilty. Not only so, but it was discovered that several attempts had been made to corrupt them. Thus, whatever his other faults, so far from being corrupted, the French deputy had shown himself surer than he had been believed. The electors voted accordingly. The majority of the calumniated were re-elected, the majority of the calumniators failed. Thus through all the crises of the Third Republic universal suffrage has been proved trustworthy and wise; it has opposed the successive experiments of Monarchism and Cæsarism, it has maintained the traditions of Liberalism when they were in danger of being overthrown,

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and finally, it has had strength to withstand the suggestions of calumny.

It would seem that it has not seen the end of the ordeal in store for it. Without in the least affecting airs of prophecy, we may safely say that before very long it will have to deliver a verdict on other questions equally delicate and important. Problems of judicial error have always had a strong fascination for the public; moreover, the Dreyfus affair presents so many dramatic possibilities that we can in a measure understand the feelings it has aroused; but it would be far from clear-sighted to see in it nothing but a mere judicial question. Round this question a conflict has broken out between militarism and democracy; and posterity will only be surprised that it did not break out sooner. Hitherto the existence of a formidable Army in the very heart of a democratic Republic, and the subordination of the permanent chiefs of that Army to the temporary chiefs of the Republic, were regarded as Utopian dreams never to be realised. As such Tocqueville regarded them, and the experience of centuries has justified his view. If we come to think of it, the duration of such a state of things for nearly

thirty years strikes us as nothing less than a miracle of patriotism. The work of the Third Republic has been rendered almost impossible owing to the disastrous example of Germany, who, in order to realise more speedily her dream of unity, has imposed on herself, and consequently on all Europe, the continued demoralising *régime* of an armed peace. No *régime* could be less compatible with the establishment and maintenance of a Republic. In the officers it induces a state of nervous excitement which tends to make them depart from legal ways, and moves them to expend at home the energy which finds no outlet abroad. As for the soldiers, they happen to be not only soldiers but citizens, who are required to sacrifice both their fortunes and their freedom for the sake of a collective good of which they do not appreciate the immediate necessity. For not only are they obliged to serve themselves, but they have to bear the weight of very heavy taxes to keep up the Army. And these citizens are the masters of the Government, since the Government is instituted and supported by their votes. Thus they both consent to maintain the Army, and to submit to the sacrifice that it demands from

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them. It is obvious that under such a *régime* the citizens are subjected to no severer tests of self-devotion than the officers. The colonial enterprise towards which the genius of Jules Ferry drafted off a part of the national energy, no doubt helped to satisfy the impatience of the officers; while the danger of an attack from Germany, a danger that could only cease with the retirement of Prince Bismarck, encouraged the country in its patriotic habit of abnegation. Nevertheless, it would be only human nature if some ill-feeling were to be shown on either side. And this is what has happened in the Dreyfus affair. The officers, in a fit of nervous irritation over their thankless task, showed a tendency to set themselves above the law; the citizens, weary with much sacrifice, lost heart and adopted, if not a hostile, at any rate a defiant attitude towards the officers. This I take to be the crisis at the present moment. Nothing more can be said; for whatever the probabilities may be, it would be unwise to predict the development of the case; but I think that that development will be comprehensible to every one who regards the Dreyfus affair as only the occasional cause of conflict,

who recognises the real cause in the natural unfriendliness between the army and democracy.

While still observing prudence in my judgments as to the future, I believe I can point out two problems for which, unless very unforeseen circumstances arise, the Third Republic will be bound to seek a solution, for the simple reason that the terms of the problem are already laid down. The first is what I shall call the diplomatic problem. Whether the Russian alliance was, or was not, a political necessity for France (it is permissible to doubt it in spite of good arguments in its favour), it was at any rate a historical necessity. Whatever her form of government, the diplomacy of France will always find an irresistible attention in the system of alliances; it is a sort of hereditary tendency. In former times, except when confronted by a general coalition, France was always engaged in contracting alliances, or in undoing those already contracted in order to form another tie. England, Germany, and Russia, from time to time, have all contrived to live in voluntary isolation. The isolation of France has never been anything but temporary and involuntary. Isolation

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weighs on her; she does not know how to reap the fruits of it, and she is in a hurry to bring it to an end. Under the Revolution, when any idea of a foreign alliance seemed forbidden to her, the Committee of Public Safety none the less complacently looked forward to negotiations with Powers the most hostile to its acts and to its policy. Napoleon III. even before he ascended the throne was engaged in forming a European system. Louis Philippe, though compelled to greater modesty, dreamed the same dream, and we have only to read the dispatches of Lamartine and M. Bastide, his successor as Minister of Foreign Affairs, to affirm that in spite of its fleeting existence and pacific intentions the Republic of 1848 could not support the idea of finding no partner among the Powers of Europe. The Restoration and the Third Republic alone succeeded in practising a policy of isolation; and then it was a question of political skill in the one case, of necessity in the other. Under Charles X. there had been symptoms of a return to the old system of alliances, and the statesmen of the Third Republic from the very first were anxious to enter into new negotiations as soon as

they saw their way to it. This anxiety of theirs was much too evident, and as it was shared by the nation, it so happened that the Franco-Russian alliance was signed with a certain want of dignity on the part of France, and it brought her none of those advantages which her position entitled her to claim.

But that is beside the question. The fact remains that such an alliance exists between a Republic and an absolute Empire; and this seems to me likely to become a fresh source of difficulties for France. Indeed we can foresee that, given such a total difference in the methods of government in the two countries, one-half of the business will have to be withdrawn for the examination of the French Chamber; for affairs that do not penetrate outside beyond the imperial cabinet at Petersburg cannot be freely discussed in Paris. Democracy will thus lose one of its chief prerogatives, the power to dispose freely of its own future and to fix the bounds of its own undertakings. Moreover, the Presidency has surely changed its character when the man who holds it can actually bring himself to dispose by a secret Treaty of the finances and the sword of the Republic. From that day

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the Presidency must tend to become, not indeed a monarchic institution, but a fruitful soil for certain monarchic traditions and habits. These are simple questions which the future alone can answer. But I repeat, it seems almost impossible for the Republic to escape the difficulties of internal government which must arise from the Franco-Russian alliance, unless the tie becomes wholly Platonic, thereby altogether losing its effectiveness and its *raison d'être*.

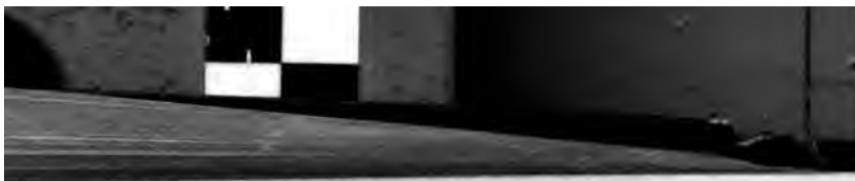
The second of the problems I have indicated is more serious, and would seem to be still more inevitable, I mean the administrative problem. The work of Napoleon I. was two-fold. He tried to create a permanent political *régime* and failed. But at the same time he hedged French society round by a circle of administrative laws which have survived him; and though they are in open contradiction to the national tradition, for a century no later government has dared to touch them. One can say even that it is in this institution that the genius of Napoleon is most conspicuous. The work was an unhappy one, but it was none the less a work of genius. It rests on a single unique principle, State tutelage. Agreed

that the citizen is to be perpetually guided and superintended, it follows as a natural consequence that he is to be suspected. The whole system of French administration, embracing finance as well as education (for Napoleon assimilated the training of children to the collection of taxes), rests on this fundamental basis. It may be imagined what obstacles such an organisation offers to progress. But whatever has been supposed to the contrary, it does not go so far as to render political liberty impossible. Criticism is always free, and as the French of all people most readily lend themselves to criticism, they cannot complain that they have no political freedom. They had it under the constitutional monarchy; they have it still more at the present day. But in all other respects administrative centralisation hinders reform, complicates everything, increases public expenses, and renders fruitless all improvements attempted in the various services. All this is unfortunate, but it is not enough to make a crisis. The thing that will bring that about is Socialism.

Administrative centralisation is, in fact, the instrument most essentially fitted to serve

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socialistic principles. The day will come when these principles will be a more certain danger ; when the defenders of individual property will be driven to the necessity of sacrificing administrative centralisation, and establishing provincial and communal institutions, united by a sort of national federalism. This will be the sole effectual remedy for the rapid spread of Socialism, for in the present state of things, Socialism only needs to mount a little higher in the system of administration in order to invade the whole, and that before very long. Now in the last twenty years Socialism has made considerable progress in England, Germany, and France. The absence of centralisation in England, the prestige of the Imperial throne in Germany, provide means of resistance which do not exist in France. This is why the danger in France seems to me to be greater and nearer at hand than elsewhere ; and in the hour of danger that country will find itself confronted with two alternatives, either to abandon itself to the perilous chances of State Socialism, or to destroy an administrative system which must inevitably lead it there.



THE CONCLUSION

Now what are we to conclude from the facts which have been set forth in the preceding chapters? The first advantage of reviewing, however briefly, the history of France since 1814, is to throw light on the general character of this period, and to reveal a whole where we are too much accustomed to see nothing but scattered and disconnected fragments. Since 1814 France has been engaged in a work of reconstruction, to which she set herself at first with loyalty and in the firm hope of success. Then came the Hundred Days, then the Revolution of 1830, which threatened the structure by removing from it a very important prop. That prop was loyalty. In spite of the crisis of 1793 it had been still possible to believe in the stability of the house of Bourbon. But after the accident of 1830 belief was no longer possible.



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An attempt was then made to transform the uncertain *régime* of 1830 into a structure more durable than that which had just crumbled away. The flattering hope was cherished that the House of Orleans, holding the crown at once by a kind of hereditary right and of popular election, would bring to it a twofold strength. This could not be, because, though two forces certainly existed, they were antagonistic to each other. A more definite state of policy, a wider experience of liberty would, no doubt, have enabled the French people to make the compromise last beyond the first change of king. But it was evident that its future was not sufficiently assured for this. The terrible disturbances of fifty years ago, and the amazing results to which they gave rise, had far-reaching consequences for the nation. The great French Revolution meant a sudden setting loose of ideas, and a corresponding unfettering of passions; the ideas were generous, the passions brutish. The sword of Napoleon silenced them; but the silence was only for a time. As soon as liberty reappeared revolutionary ideas were again current, weakened no doubt, but still fascinating and always Utopian.

And each time that liberty was suffered to degenerate into licence and violence, revolutionary passions showed themselves once more, dragging after them a train of terrific memories, and arousing by this very fact the temptation to use the sword which had once laid them low. Not the best conditions for establishing a free government. So at least it strikes the reflective mind.

1848 was the crowning proof of these difficulties, which it reproduced in miniature. In less than a year France abandoned herself with *naïf* enthusiasm to the most impracticable ideas, which led to frightful disorder, and ended by an appeal to the Dictatorship. By a curious irony of fate, the middle of the century saw reproduced in ten months the whole cycle of ten years of revolution; it was a briefer, fainter echo of the storm.

And the Dictatorship led for the second time to invasion and the partial dismemberment of the national soil. Less fierce than its prototype, it was coloured in its dawn and its decline with a dim reflection of Parliamentarism. At the beginning of his Presidency and at the end of his reign, Louis Napoleon was supported by an Assembly whose advice



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he never took, but which nevertheless represented the country. When the disaster of 1870 revived in an aggravated form the situation of 1814, the nation, which had lost its faith in royalty, and had twice all but perished through Cæsarism, was anxious for an impersonal government, and asserted its will to create another Republic. And under this label, less glorious but more discreet, it revived those fine parliamentary institutions first formulated by Louis XVIII., and to which it owed more than thirty years of peace and prosperity.

And the Republic has lived, thanks to the wisdom of that universal suffrage which has withstood all the assaults made by a vanquished minority, in the name of the great memories of the past. In order to attain its perfect form, it will have to overcome yet other difficulties. What is curious, there is every reason to believe that, being as it is under pain of death at the hands of Socialism, it will have to make up its mind to destroy the work of centralisation accomplished by the First Republic, and confirmed so solemnly by Napoleon I. When that day comes it will

not only have restored the true historical tradition of old France, it will have broken once and for ever with Bonapartism.

Until then, perhaps, unforeseen events may bring again on the scene some representative of the fallen dynasties. But their *rôle* can never be other than the most ephemeral. For nations, as for children, there are some object-lessons which are never forgotten. Henceforth for France the Republic has been the one *régime* which has lasted, the one *régime* in which the transference of power has taken place peaceably, the only one which has never seen the erection of barricades. The last quarter of a century may seem to contemporaries dull and grey; it will shine in the eyes of posterity with a somewhat more vivid light. What with political stability, great Exhibitions, the constitution of an immense colonial empire (the resources of which have, unfortunately, never been adequately appreciated and opened out), this period will not figure altogether badly in history. It has been favourable to liberty as well as to the Republic. It is said that the French are not made for self-government; but if certain



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causes have delayed the growth of public spirit in France, it is impossible to deny the existence of this growth, unless we wilfully close our eyes to the evidence of history. If in the future through any catastrophe, or in consequence of some turn in the direction of Socialism, the nation delivers its freedom for the third time into the hands of one or more dictators, it is not likely that this abdication will be lasting. The stimulating memory of the days of freedom of speech and freedom of the Press will not soon be effaced. For Liberty there is no longer any capital punishment; it may be imprisoned for a time, but its head is safe. It seems then very certain that henceforth Liberty and the Republic have taken permanent root in the national soil.

It may not be altogether useless to draw from these facts yet another moral. The history of contemporary France shows that revolutions and sudden changes are as a rule fruitless; that even where they seemed destined to bring about improvements and confer advantages, the far-off counter-blow is ominous. Can't one imagine retrospectively the reform of the *ancien régime*, wisely undertaken by

deputies distinguished for their talent and their good intentions, seconded, as it was, by Louis XVI. (a monarch, by the way, much misunderstood, who had given so many proofs of wisdom and goodness); later Charles X., urged to strict observance of the charter by the calm and steadfast attitude of a Parliament which by no means desired his fall; the Monarchy of July, consolidated by a larger-minded ministry and a public less inclined to listen to sophistry and theories; then, after the insurrection of June 1848, a nation more completely master of itself, less ready to seek a saviour outside, content in the meanwhile with the body of distinguished men who made its laws, and the honest Republican officials who undertook to enforce them—when we look back upon all these things that were possible after all, do they not seem to point to a better future than any which has been yet realised?

If only the French people, made wise by experience, would cease to believe in radical expedients; if only—now that time has somewhat dulled the reverberation of the thunder-storm of 1793—if only they would conscien-



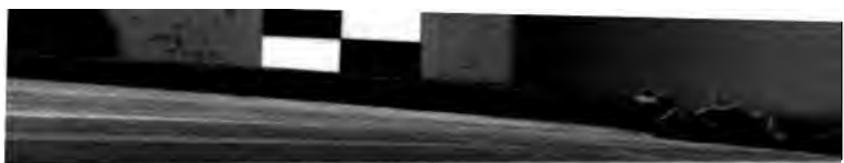
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tiously set to work to finish what they have so well begun! When everything is said and done, the work will be very superior to anything we could have hoped to see in the miserable days of 1870.

THE END.





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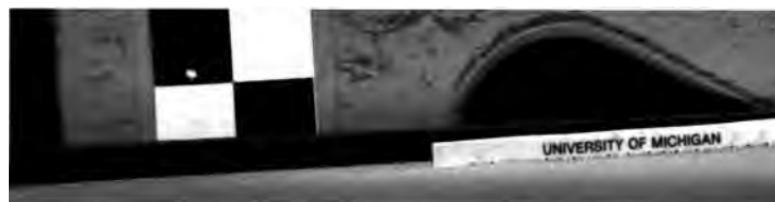
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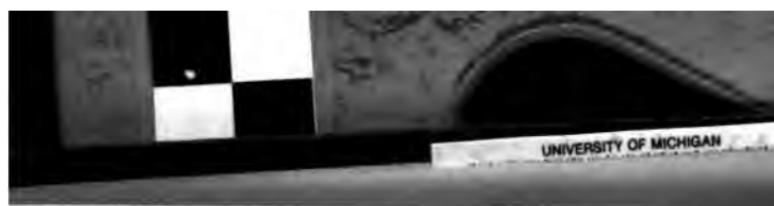
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